Women's Voices

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Women's Voices

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

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Women's Voices

An Anthology of the most Characteristic Poems by English, Scotch, and Irish Women

SELECTED, ARRANGED, AND EDITED

BY

MRS. WILLIAM SHARP

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TO ALL WOMEN.

TO MY MOTHER.

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1897

PREFACE.

VARIOUS circumstances have occurred to delay the publication of this volume. It was originally intended to be an anthology from the writings of women-poets between 1685 and 1885; but I do not regret the delay in its appearance, for I have thereby been enabled to include no inconsiderable amount of fine poetic work which has appeared during the last two and a-half years.

It is a somewhat hackneyed remark, that if some of the poetry of our younger writers had appeared a century ago, the authors would have achieved a fame, or at any rate a reputation, beyond all comparison with the scanty meed of acknowledgment which is their present reward. It is, however, not generally recognised how much of verse of high intellectual and artistic quality has been written by women during the last two centuries. One or two names have a high place on the roll of fame; others are rewarded with honourable if somewhat patronising mention and approval; and many whose productions are of a quality exceptionally noteworthy are totally forgotten, or —as in the case of living authors—strangely, and one is

inclined to say, ungenerously neglected. In the great and ever-increasing pressure of literary production it would be unreasonable to expect that every true voice should make itself heard, even for the brief while of its singing-days: many, indeed most poets, must be content with the selfish reward of their art.

Of book-making there is no end; but if the production of books by those who, like myself, have no faculty for original work, is reprehensible, there is, at least, good reason for anthologies. Since much that is fine in itself, so illustrative of the development of character, so representative of an age, must perish, it is surely well that the quintessence of it—the amber left by subsided seas, so to speak—should be preserved. If one's many words are to be as dead and withered leaves, it is a fortunate guerdon from fate if a single lyric, a single sonnet, carries its music or its message to a few hearts here and there among those who come after us. It does not matter if one's name be forgotten, though it is a pleasant thought that it may be mentioned approvingly in days to come. "The Land o' the Leal," "Auld Robin Gray," and other familiar lyrics and poems by women, have survived, not only on account of their pathetic humanity and lyrical sweetness, but also in some measure, at least, because they came into existence at a time when there were far fewer voices than at present, and when the national inheritance of song was not so manifold as it now is.

Mere selections serve, I fear, no important end: of still less value are these when they are, as is so often the case, fragmentary in themselves, and collectively invertebrate.

I think *Women's Voices* speak for themselves; and it is no presumption, but only conformity to a not unwise custom, which induces me to say a few words on behalf of my own work, to put forth my claim.

There have been many anthologies, lyrical treasuries, sonnet collections, and so forth, and among them a few compilations devoted entirely to woman's work in poetry. The latter may be divided into three sections: books dealing with poets according to locality or nationality—books dealing with song-writers, pure and simple—and books dealing with extracts from popular authors.

There has not, so far as I am aware, been any anthology formed with the definite aim to represent each of our women-poets by one or more essentially characteristic poems. Too often, on the other hand, women have been represented by their most indifferent productions: generally, the various selections have been given anyhow, after a predetermined arrangement in chronological or alphabetical sequence. In this volume it has been my endeavour not only to represent each woman with whose writings I am acquainted or with whose writings I have come in contact, but to do so characteristically. I do not, therefore, claim that in every instance a writer is represented by her supreme achievement: each, I hope, is herein introduced

by lines at once noteworthy for their own sake and eminently characteristic of the author's genius or talent.

The scope of the volume covers—it will thus be seen—practically new ground. I do not think that the poetry enshrined herein requires any apology from me or from any one: it speaks for itself, and—to my mind, at any rate—conclusively enough. No inconsiderable portion of it is culled from the writings of unknown writers and of authors of very limited reputation: but I am convinced that the selection is not inferior to any that might be made from the poetry of men of similar standing. I have been fortunately placed for an acquaintance with much fugitive poetry, and can assert with emphasis that there is a greater wealth of really fine poetic writing at present appearing in more or less obscure quarters than has ever appeared at any other period of our literary history. It is perhaps beside the mark—and I may be accused of bias and prejudice—but I am glad to be able to express at least one opinion when I say, that among the minor poets of this generation women have written more that is worthy to endure than men have done. It is, however, not a question of assertion or denial: the settlement of the question is within the power of every one who cares to go into the matter intelligently, sympathetically, and without prejudice.

The idea of making this anthology arose primarily from the conviction that our women-poets had never been

collectively represented with anything like adequate justice; that the works of many are not so widely known as they deserve to be; and that at least some fine fugitive poetry could thus be rescued from oblivion. My claim, now that my task is at an end, is, that the following selections will further emphasise the value of women's work in poetry for those who are already well acquainted with English Literature, and that they will convince many it is as possible to form an anthology of "pure poetry" from the writings of women as from those of men. It was because I felt so assured I would have to make no apology that the labour has been to me one of love.

Women have had many serious hindrances to contend against—defective education, lack of broad experience of life, absence of freedom in which to make full use of natural abilities, and the force of public and private opinion, both of which have always been prone to prejudge her work unfavourably, or at best apologetically. These deterrent influences are gradually passing away, with the result that an ever-widening field for the exercise of their powers is thus afforded to women. Herein was an additional reason for the chronological arrangement of this volume. I found, as I trust others may, that the collection thus made pointed to a steady development of intellectual power, certainly not unaccompanied by artistic faculty—a fact which gives further sanction to the belief that still finer work will be produced in the future by women-poets.

I wish here to acknowledge the collaboration of living writers who have so courteously contributed poems to my anthology, or who have afforded me permission to make such selection from their works as I desired. If there are any authors, or copyright-holders, with whom I have unwittingly omitted to communicate, I trust they will not consider themselves aggrieved: between the injustice of omission and the liberty of representation without consent there could be little hesitation on my part. To the various publishers, also, who have kindly consented to my use of copyright matter, I desire to express my indebtedness, more especially to Messrs. Smith, Elder, & Co., to Messrs. Bentley & Son, and to Messrs. Kegan Paul & Co. To Mr. Richard Garnett my thanks are due for much kind help in calling my attention to certain poems with which I should otherwise have remained unacquainted; and also to Professor Eric S. Robertson, whose biographical and critical *English Poetesses* has been of great assistance to me in the compilation of this book.

ELIZABETH A. SHARP.

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REVENGE.

THE fairest action of our human life
Is scorning to revenge an injury;
For who forgives without a further strife,
His adversarie's heart to him doth tie.
And 'tis a firmer conquest truly said,
To win the heart, than overthrow the head.

If we a worthy enemy do find,
To yield to worth it must be nobly done;
But if of baser metal be his mind,
In base revenge there is no honour won.
Who would a worthy courage overthrow
And who would wrestle with a worthless foe?

We say our hearts are great and cannot yield;
Because they cannot yield, it proves them poor:
Great hearts are tasked beyond their powers but seld,
The weakest lion will the loudest roar
Truth's school for certain doth this same allow,
High-heartedness doth sometimes teach to bow.

A noble heart doth teach a virtuous scorn—
To scorn to owe a duty overlong;
To scorn to be for benefits forborne;
To scorn to lie, to scorn to do a wrong;
To scorn to bear an injury in mind;
To scorn a free-born heart slave-like to bind.

But if for wrongs we needs revenge must have,
Then be our vengeance of the noblest kind;
Do we his body from our fury save,
And let our hate prevail against our mind?
What can 'gainst him a greater vengeance be,
Than make his woe more worthy far than he?

Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry, Act iv.

SONG BY LADY HAPPY

AS A SEA-GODDESS.

My cabinets are oyster-shells,
In which I keep my Orient pearls;
And modest coral I do wear,
Which blushes when it touches air.

On silvery waves I sit and sing,
And then the fish lie listening:
Then resting on a rocky stone
I comb my hair with fishes' bone;

The whilst Apollo with his beams
Doth dry my hair from soaking streams,
His light doth glaze the water's face,
And make the sea my looking-glass.

So when I swim on waters high
I see myself as I glide by,
But when the sun begins to burn,
I back into my waters turn,

And dive unto the bottom low:
Then on my head the waters flow
In curlèd waves and circles round,
And thus with eddies I am crowned.

From the "Convent of Pleasure."

("*The Matchless Orinda.*")

FRIENDSHIP'S MYSTERY.

COME, my Lucasia, since we see
That miracles men's faith do move,
By wonder and by prodigy,
To the dull, angry world let's prove
There's a religion in our love.

For though we were designed to agree
That fate no liberty destroys,
But our election is as free
As angels, who with greedy choice,
Are yet determined to their joys.

Our hearts are doubled by the loss,
Here mixture is addition grown;
We both diffuse, and both ingross;
And we whose minds are so much one,
Never, yet never are alone.

We court our own captivity
Than thrones more great and innocent,
'Twere Banishment to be set free
Since we wear fetters whose intent
Not bondage is, but ornament.

Divided joys are tedious found,
And griefs united easier grow ;
We are ourselves but by rebound,
And all our titles shuffled so,
Both princes, and both subjects too.

Our hearts are mutual victims laid,
While they (such power in friendship lies)
Are altars, priests, and offerings made ;
And each heart which thus kindly dies
Grows deathless by the sacrifice.

A SONG.

Love in fantastic triumph sate,
Whilst bleeding hearts around him flowed,
From whom fresh pains he did create,
And strange tyrannic power he showed;
From thy bright eyes he took his fires,
Which round about in sport he hurled;
But 'twas from mine he took desires
Enough to undo the amorous world.

From me he took his sighs and tears,
From thee his pride and cruelty,
From me his languishment and fears,
And every killing dart from thee;
Thus thou and I the god have armed,
And set him up a deity;
But my poor heart alone is harmed,
While thine the victor is, and free.

From "Abdelazar."

A NOCTURNAL REVERIE.

In such a night, when every louder wind
Is to its distant cavern safe confined,
And only gentle Zephyr fans his wings,
And lonely Philomel, still waking, sings,
Or from some tree, framed for the owl's delight,
She, hollowing clear, directs the wanderer right,—
In such a night, when passing clouds give place,
Or thinly veil the heaven's mysterious face,
When in some river, overhung with green,
The waving moon and trembling leaves are seen,
When freshened grass now bears itself upright
And makes cool banks to pleasing rest invite,
Whence spring the woodbine and the bramble-rose,
And where the sleepy cowslip sheltered grows,
Whilst now a paler hue the foxglove takes,
Yet chequers still with red the dusty brakes,
When scattered glow-worms,—but in twilight fine,—
Shew trivial beauties, watch their hour to shine,
While Salisbury stands the test of every light,
In perfect charms, and perfect beauty bright;
When odours, which declined repelling day,
Through temperate air uninterrupted stray;
When darkened groves their softest shadows wear,
And falling waters we distinctly hear;
When through the gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient fabric awful in repose;
While sunburned hills their swarthy looks conceal,
And swelling haycocks thicken up the vale;

When the loosed horse now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing thro' the adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace and lengthened shade we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear;
When nibbling sheep at large pursue their food,
And unmolested kine rechew the cud;
When curlews cry beneath the village-walls,
And to her straggling brood the partridge calls;
Their short-lived jubilee the creatures keep,
Which but endures, whilst tyrant man doth sleep;
When a sedate content the spirit feels,
And no fierce light disturbs, whilst it reveals;
But silent musings urge the mind to seek
Something too high for syllables to speak;
Till the free soul to a composedness charmed,
Finding the elements of rage disarmed,
O'er all below a solemn quiet grown,
Joys in the inferior world, and thinks it like her own;
In such a night let me abroad remain,
Till morning breaks and all's confused again—
Our cares, our toils, our clamours all renewed,
Our pleasures, seldom reached, again pursued.

WERENA MY HEART LICHT.

THERE was ance a may and she loo'd[1] na men :
She biggit[2] her bonnie bower down i' yon glen ;
But now she cries Dool ! and Well-a-day !
Come down the green gate and come here away.
But now she cries, etc.

When bonnie young Johnnie cam' owre the sea,
He said he saw naething sae lovely as me ;
He hecht[3] me baith rings and mony braw things,
And werena my heart licht I wad dee.
He hecht me, etc.

His wee wilfu' tittie[4] she loo'd na me,
I was taller and twice as bonnie as she ;
She raised sic a pother 'twixt him and his mother,
That werena my heart licht I wad dee.
She raised, etc.

The day was set for the bridal to be,
The wife took a dwam[5] and lay down to dee ;
She mained and she graned[6] wi' fause dolour and pain,
Till he vow'd he never wad see me again.
She mained, etc.

[1] Loved. [2] Built [3] Promised. [4] Sister. [5] Fit of sickness.
[6] Moaned and groaned.

His kindred socht[1] ane o' higher degree,
Said, Would he wed ane was landless like me?
Although I was bonnie, I wasna for Johnnie,
And werena my heart licht I wad dee.
Although I was bonnie, etc.

They said I had neither coo nor cawf,[2]
Nor dribbles o' drink coming through the draff,[3]
Nor pickles[4] o' meal rinnin' frae the mill-e'e;
And werena my heart licht I wad dee.
Nor pickles, etc.

His tittie she was baith wylie[5] and slee,
She spied me as I cam' ower the lea;
And then she ran in, and made a loud din;
Believe your ain e'en an ye trow na me.
And then she ran in, etc.

His bonnet stood aye fu' round on his brow;
His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new;
But now he let's 't wear ony[6] gait it will hing,
And casts himsel' dowie[7] upon the corn-bing.
But now he, etc.

[1] Sought. [2] Cow nor calf. [3] Grain. [4] Small quantities.
[5] Wily and sly. [6] Any way it will hang. [7] Dolefully.

And now he gaes daundrin'[1] about the dykes,[2]
And a' he dow do is to hound the tykes :[3]
The live-lang nicht he ne'er steeks[4] his e'e ;
And werena my heart licht I wad dee.
The live-lang nicht, etc.

Oh ! were we young now as we ance hae been,
We should hae been gallopin' down on yon green,
And linkin' it ower the lily-white lea ;
And werena my heart licht I wad dee.
And linkin' it, etc.

[1] Loitering. [2] Stone walls between fields. [3] Dogs. [4] Shuts his eye.

THERE'S NAE LUCK ABOUT THE HOUSE.

And are ye sure the news is true?
And are ye sure he's weel?
Is this a time to think o' wark?
Ye jauds,[1] fling by your wheel.
Is this a time to think o' wark,
When Colin's at the door?
Rax me my cloak, I'll to the quay,
And see him come ashore.

For there's nae luck about the house,
There's nae luck ava;
There's little pleasure in the house
When our gudeman's awa'.

And gie to me my bigonet,
My bishop-satin gown;
For I maun tell the bailie's wife
That Colin's come to town.
My turkey slippers maun gae on,
My hose o' pearl blue;
It's a' to please my ain gudeman,
For he's baith leal and true.

[1] Jades, maids.

Rise up and mak' a clean fireside,
  Put on the muckle[1] pot:
Gie little Kate her Sunday gown,
  And Jock his button coat;
And mak' their shoon[2] as black as slaes,[3]
  Their hose as white as snaw;
It's a' to please my ain gudeman,
  For he's been lang awa'.

There's twa fat hens upon the bank,
  They've fed this month and mair,
Mak' haste and thraw[4] their necks about,
  That Colin weel may fare;
And spread the table neat and clean,
  Gar ilka[5] thing look braw;
For wha can tell how Colin fared
  When he was far awa'?

Sae true his heart, sae smooth his speech,
  His breath like caller[6] air;
His very foot has music in't
  As he comes up the stair.
And will I see his face again?
  And will I hear him speak?
I'm downricht dizzy wi' the thocht,
  In troth I'm like to greet.[7]

[1] Large. [2] Shoes. [3] Sloes. [4] Wring.
[5] Every. [6] Fresh. [7] Weep.

The cauld blasts o' the winter wind,
That thrilled through my heart,
They're a' blown by; I ha'e him safe,
Till death we'll never part:
But what puts parting in my heid,
It may be far awa';
The present moment is our ain,
The neist we never saw.

Since Colin's weel, I'm weel content,
I hae nae mair to crave:
Could I but live to mak' him blest,
I'm blest aboon the lave:[1]
And will I see his face again?
And will I hear him speak?
I'm downricht dizzy wi' the thocht,
In troth I'm like to greet.

For there's nae luck about the house,
There' nae luck ava;
There's little pleasure in the house
When our gudeman's awa'.

1 Rest.

THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST.

I'VE seen the smiling
Of Fortune beguiling;
I have felt all its favours, and found its decay.
Sweet was its blessing,
Kind its caressing,
But now it has fled—fled far away.

I've seen the forest
Adorned the foremost,
With Flowers of the Forest most pleasant and gay,
Sae bonnie was their blooming,
Their scent the air perfuming;
But now they are withered, and a' wede away.

I've seen the morning
With gold the hills adorning,
And loud tempests storming before the mid-day.
I've seen the Tweed's siller stream
Glittering in the sunny beam,
Grow drumly and dark as they row'd on their way.

Oh, fickle Fortune,
Why this cruel sporting?
Oh, why still perplex us poor sons of the day.
Nae mair your smiles can cheer me,
Nae mair your frowns can fear me,
For the Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST.

I'VE heard them lilting,[1] at our yowe-milking,
Lasses a-lilting, before the dawn of day;
But now they are moaning on ilka green loaning,
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At buchts,[2] in the morning, nae blythe lads are scorning,
The lasses are lanely and dowie[3] and wae;
Nae daffin',[4] nae gabbin', but sighin' and sabbin',
Ilk ane lifts her hylen[5] and hies her away.

In hairst,[6] at the shearing, nae youths now are jeering,
The bandsters[7] are lyart, and runkled, and grey;
At fair or at preaching, nae wooing, nae fleeching,[8]
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At e'en, in the gloaming, nae swankies[9] are roaming
Bout stacks wi' the lasses at bogle[10] to play,
But ilk ane sits drearie, lamenting her dearie:
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

[1] Singing. [2] Sheep-pens. [3] Doleful. [4] Romping. [5] Milk-pail.
[6] Harvest. [7] Sheaf-binders. [8] Cajoling. [9] Gallants.
[10] Hide and seek.

Dule[1] and wae to the order sent our lads to the Border,
The English for ance by guile won the day;
The Flowers of the Forest, that focht[2] aye the foremost,
The prime of our land are cauld in the clay.

We'll hae nae mair lilting at the yowe-milking;
Women and bairns are heartless and wae,
Sighing and moaning, on ilka green loaning:
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

[1] Sorrow and sadness. [2] Fought.

THE THREE WARNINGS.

A TALE.

THE tree of deepest root is found
Least willing still to quit the ground;
'Twas therefore said by ancient sages,
That love of life increased with years,
So much that, in our latter stages,
When pain grows sharp and sickness rages,
The greatest love of life appears.
This great affliction to believe,
Which all confess but few perceive,
If old affections can't prevail,
Be pleased to hear a modern tale.
When sports went round and all were gay,
On Neighbour Dobson's wedding-day,
Death called aside the jocund groom
With him into another room:
And looking grave, "You must," says he,
"Quit your sweet bride and come with me."
"With you! and quit my Susan's side?
With you?" the hapless husband cried:
"Young as I am; 'tis monstrous hard;
Besides, in truth, I'm not prepared:
My thoughts on other matters go,
This is my wedding-night, you know."
What more he urged I have not heard,
His reasons could not well be stronger,
So Death the poor delinquent spared,
And left to live a little longer.

Yet calling up a serious look,
His hour-glass trembled while he spoke,
"Neighbour," he said, "farewell. No more
Shall Death disturb your mirthful hour;
And further, to avoid all blame
Of cruelty upon my name,
To give you time for preparation,
And fit you for your future station,
Three several warnings you shall have
Before you're summoned to the grave:
Willing, for once, I'll quit my prey,
And grant a kind reprieve;
In hopes you'll have no more to say,
But, when again I call this way,
Well-pleased the world will leave."
To these conditions both consented,
And parted perfectly contented.
What next the hero of our tale befell,
How long he lived, how wise, how well,
How roundly he pursued his course,
And smoked his pipe and stroked his horse,
The willing muse shall tell:
He chaffered, then, he bought, he sold,
Nor once perceived his growing old,
Nor thought of death as near;
His friends not false, his wife no shrew,
Many his gains, his children few,
He passed his hours in peace;
But while he viewed his wealth increase,
While thus along life's dusty road
The beaten track content he trod,
Old Time, whose haste no mortal spares,
Uncalled, unheeded, unawares,

Brought him his eightieth year.
And now one night in musing mood,
As all alone he sat,
The unwelcome messenger of fate
Once more before him stood.
Half stilled with anger and surprise,
"So soon returned!" old Dobson cries.
"So soon, d'ye call it?" Death replies:
"Surely, my friend, you're but in jest;
Since I was here before
'Tis six-and-thirty years at least,
And you are now fourscore."
"So much the worse," the clown rejoined,
"To spare the aged would be kind;
However, see your search be legal,
And your authority, is't regal?
Else you are come on a fool's errand,
With but a secretary's warrant.
Besides, you promised me three warnings,
Which I have looked for nights and mornings;
But for that loss of time and ease
I can recover damages."
"I know," cries Death, "that at the best
I seldom am a welcome guest;
But don't be captious, friend; at least
I little thought you'd still be able
To stump about your farm and stable;
Your years have run to a great length,
I wish you joy, though, of your strength."
"Hold!" says the farmer, "not so fast,
I have been lame these four years past."
"And no great wonder," Death replies;
"However, you still keep your eyes,

And sure, to see one's loves and friends,
For legs and arms would make amends."
"Perhaps," says Dobson, "so it might,
But latterly I've lost my sight."
"This is a shocking story, faith,
Yet there's some comfort still," says Death.
"Each strives your sadness to amuse,
I warrant you have all the news."
"There's none," cries he, "and if there were
I'm grown so deaf I could not hear."
"Nay, then," the spectre stern rejoined,
"These are unjustifiable yearnings;
If you are lame, and deaf, and blind,
You've had your three sufficient warnings.
So come along, no more we'll part,"
He said, and touched him with his dart;
And now old Dobson, turning pale,
Yields to his fate—so ends my tale.

CA' THE YOWES TO THE KNOWES.

Ca' the yowes[1] to the knowes,
Ca' them where the heather grows,
Ca' them where the burnie rows,
My bonnie dearie.

As I gaed down the water-side,
There I met my shepherd lad,
He row'd[2] me sweetly in his plaid,
An' he ca'd me his dearie.

"Will ye gang down the water-side,
And see the waves sae sweetly glide
Beneath the hazels spreading wide?
The moon it shines fu' clearly.

"Ye shall get gowns and ribbons meet,
Calf-leather shoon[3] to thy white feet,
And in my arms ye'se lie and sleep,
And ye shall be my dearie."

[1] Ewes. [2] Wrapped. [3] Calf leather shoes.

"If ye'll but stand to what ye've said,
I'se gang[1] wi' you, my shepherd lad,
And ye may row me in your plaid,
And I shall be your dearie."

"While water wimples to the sea,
While day blinks in the lift sae hie,
Till clay-cauld death shall blin' my e'e,
Ye shall be my dearie."

[1] Go.

MY MOTHER BIDS ME BIND MY HAIR.

My mother bids me bind my hair
With bands of rosy hue,
Tie up my sleeves with ribbons rare,
And lace my bodice blue.

"For why," she cries, "sit still and weep,
While others dance and play?"
Alas! I scarce can go or creep,
While Lubin is away.

'Tis sad to think the days are gone,
When those we love are near;
I sit upon this mossy stone,
And sigh when none can hear.

And while I spin my flaxen thread,
And sing my simple lay,
The village seems asleep or dead,
Now Lubin is away.

LIFE.

'Animula, vagula, blandula.'

Life! I know not what thou art,
But I know that thou and I must part;
And when, or how, or where we met,
I own to me's a secret yet.
But this I know, when thou art fled,
Where'er they lay these limbs, this head,
No clod so valueless shall be
As all that there remains of me.
Oh whither, whither dost thou fly,
Where bend unseen thy trackless course?
And in this strange divorce,
Ah, tell me where I must seek this compound, I!

To the vast ocean of empyreal flame
From whence thy essence came,
Dost thou thy flight pursue, when freed
From matter's base encumbering weed?
Or dost thou, hid from sight,
Wait, like some spell-bound knight,
Through blank oblivious years th' appointed hour,
To break thy lance and reassume thy power?
Yet canst thou without thought or feeling be?
Oh, say, what art thou, when no more thou'rt thee?

Life! we've been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear;
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;
  Then steal away, give little warning,
  Choose thine own time;
Say not Good Night, but in some brighter clime
Bid me Good Morning.

THE INFLEXIBLE CAPTIVE.

FROM ACT V.

[*Scene with sight of Tiber—Ships ready for the embarkation of* REGULUS *and* HAMILCAR, *the Carthaginian Ambassador—Tribune and people stopping up the passage—*MANLIUS *the Consul, and* Lictors *endeavouring to clear it.*]

[MANLIUS *and* LICINIUS (*a tribune*), *advance.*]

Lic. ROME will not suffer Regulus to go.
Man. I thought the Consul and the Senators
Had been a part of Rome.
Lic. I grant they are—
But still the people are the greater part.
Man. The greater, not the wiser.
Lic. The less cruel;
Full of esteem and gratitude to Regulus,
We would preserve his life.
Man. And we his honour.
Lic. His honour!—
Man. Yes. Time presses. Words are vain.
Make way there—clear the passage.
Lic. On your lives
Stir not a man.
Man. I do command you, go.
Lic. And I forbid it.
Man. Clear the way, my friends.
How dares Licinius thus oppose the Consul?
Lic. How dar'st thou, Manlius, thus oppose the Tribune?

Man. I'll show thee what I dare, imprudent boy!—
Lictors, force through the passage.
Lic. Romans, guard it.
Man. Gods! is my power resisted then with arms?
Thou dost affront the Majesty of Rome.
Lic. The Majesty of Rome is in the people;
Thou dost insult it by opposing them.
People. Let noble Regulus remain in Rome.
Man. My friends, let me explain this treacherous scheme.
People. We will not hear thee—Regulus shall stay.
Man. What! none obey me?
People. Regulus shall stay.
Man. Romans attend.—
People. Let Regulus remain.

Enter REGULUS, *followed by* PUBLIUS, ATTILLA, HAMILCAR, BARCE, *etc.*

Reg. Let Regulus remain! What do I hear?
Is't possible the wish should come from you?
Can Romans give, or Regulus accept,
A life of infamy? Is't possible?
Where is the ancient virtue of my country?
Rise, rise, ye mighty spirits of old Rome!
I do invoke you from your silent tombs;
Fabricus, Cocles, and Camillus, rise,
And show your sons what their great fathers were.
My countrymen, what crime have I committed?
Alas! how has the wretched Regulus
Deserv'd your hatred?
Lic. Hatred? ah! my friend,
It is our love would break these cruel chains.
Reg. If you deprive me of my chains, I'm nothing;

They are my honours, riches, titles,—all!
They'll shame my enemies, and grace my country;
They'll waft her glory to remotest climes,
Beyond her provinces and conquer'd realms,
Where yet her conq'ring eagles never flew;
Nor shall she blush hereafter if she find
Recorded with her faithful citizens
The name of Regulus, the captive Regulus.
My countrymen, what think you, kept in awe
The Volsci, Sabines, Æqui, and Hermini?
The arms of Rome alone? no, 'twas her virtue;
That sole surviving good, which brave men keep
Though fate and warring worlds combine against them:
This still is mine—I will preserve it, Romans!
The wealth of Plutus shall not bribe it from me!
If you, alas! require this sacrifice,
Carthage herself was less my foe than Rome;
She took my freedom—she could take no more;
But Rome, to crown her work, would take my honour.
My friends! if you deprive me of my chains,
I am no more than any other slave:
Yes, Regulus becomes a common captive,
A wretched, lying, perjur'd fugitive!
But if, to grace my bonds, you leave my honour,
I shall be still a Roman though a slave.

Lic. What faith should be observ'd with savages?
What promise should be kept which bonds extort?

Reg. Unworthy subterfuge! ah! let us leave
To the wild Arab and the faithless Moor
These wretched maxims of deceit and fraud:
Examples ne'er can justify the coward:
The brave man never seeks a vindication,
Save from his own just bosom and the gods;

From principle not precedent he acts.
As that arraigns him, or as that acquits,
He stands or falls; condemn'd or justified.
Lic. Rome is no more if Regulus departs.
Reg. Let Rome remember Regulus must die!
Nor would the moment of my death be distant
If nature's work had been reserved for nature;
What Carthage means to do, *she* would have done
As speedily, perhaps, at least as surely.
My wearied life has almost reach'd its goal;
The once warm current stagnates in these veins,
Or through its icy channels slowly creeps—
View the weak arm; mark the pale furrow'd cheek,
The slackened sinew, and the dim sunk eye,
And tell me then I must not think of dying!
How can I serve you else? My feeble limbs
Would totter now beneath the armour's weight,
The burden of that body it once shielded.
You see, my friends, you see, my countrymen,
I can no longer show myself a Roman,
Except by dying like one.—Gracious Heaven
Points out a way to crown my days with glory;
Oh, do not frustrate, then, the will of Jove,
And close a life of virtue with disgrace!
Come, come, I know my noble Romans better;
I see your souls, I read repentance in them;
You all applaud me—nay, you wish my chains:
'Twas nothing but excess of love misled you,
And as you're Romans you will conquer that.
Yes!—I perceive your weakness is subdu'd—
Seize, seize the moment of returning virtue;
Throw to the ground, my sons, those hostile arms;
Retard no longer Regulus's triumph;

I do request it of you as a friend,
I call you to your duty as a patriot,
And were I still your gen'ral, I'd command you.

Lic. Lay down your arms—let Regulus depart.

[*To the People, who clear the way, and quit their arms.*]

Reg. Gods! gods! I thank you—you indeed are righteous.

Pub. See every man disarm'd. Oh, Rome! oh, father!

At. Hold, hold my heart. Alas! they all obey.

Reg. The way is clear. Hamilcar, I attend thee.

Ham. Why, I begin to envy this old man! [*Aside.*

Man. Not the proud victor on the day of triumph,
Warm from the slaughter of dispeopled realms,
Though conquer'd princes grace his chariot wheels,
Though tributary monarch wail his nod,
And vanquish'd nations bend the knee before him,
E'er shone with half the lustre that surrounds
This voluntary sacrifice for Rome!
Who loves his country will obey her laws;
Who most obeys them is the truest patriot.

Reg. Be our last parting worthy of ourselves,
Farewell! my friends.—I bless the gods who rule us,
Since I must leave you, that I leave you Romans.
Preserve the glorious name untainted still,
And you shall be the rulers of the globe,
The arbiters of earth. The farthest east,
Beyond where Ganges rolls his rapid flood,
Shall proudly emulate the Roman name.
(*Kneels.*) Ye gods, the guardians of this glorious people,
Who watch with jealous eye Æneas' race,
The land of heroes I commit you!
This ground, these walls, this people be your care!

Oh! bless them, bless them with a liberal hand!
Let fortitude and valour, truth and justice,
For ever flourish and increase among them!
And if some baneful planet threat the Capitol
With its malignant influence, oh, avert it!—
Be Regulus the victim of your wrath.—
On this white head be all your vengeance pour'd,
But spare, oh spare, and bless immortal Rome!
Ah! tears? my Romans weep? Farewell! farewell!

ATTILLA *struggles to get to* REGULUS—*is prevented—she faints—he fixes his eye steadily on her for some time, and then departs to the ships.*

Man. (*looking after him.*) Farewell! farewell! thou glory of mankind!
Protector, father, saviour of thy country!
Through Regulus the Roman name shall live,
Shall triumph over time, and mock oblivion.
Farewell! the pride of the immortal coast!
'Tis Rome alone a Regulus can boast.

AND YE SALL WALK IN SILK ATTIRE.

And ye sall walk in silk attire,
And siller hae to spare,
Gin ye'll consent to be his bride,
Nor think o' Donald mair.[1]

O wha wad[2] buy a silken gown
Wi' a puir broken heart;
Or what's to me a siller crown,
Gin frae[3] my love I part?

The mind wha's every wish is pure,
Far dearer is to me;
And ere I'm forced to break my faith
I'll lay me down an' dee!

For I hae pledged my virgin troth
Brave Donald's fate to share;
And he has gi'en to me his heart,
Wi' a' its virtues rare.

[1] More. [2] Who would. [3] Since from

His gentle manner won my heart,
He gratefu' took the gift;
Could I but think to tak' it back—
It would be waur[1] than theft!

For langest life can ne'er repay
The love he bears to me;
And ere I'm forced to break my troth
I'll lay me down an' dee.

[1] Worse.

WHAT AILS THIS HEART O' MINE?

WHAT ails this heart o' mine?
What fills this watery e'e?
What gars[1] me turn as caul' as death
When I tak' leave o' thee?
When thou art far awa',
Thou'lt dearer grow to me;
But change o' place and change o' folk
May gar thy fancy gee.[2]

When I gae out at e'en,
Or walk at morning ear',[3]
Ilk[4] rustling bush will seem to say,
"I used to meet thee there."
There I'll sit down and cry,
And live aneath the tree,
And when a leaf fa's in my lap,
I'll ca't[5] a word frae thee.

I'll hie me to the bower
That thou wi' roses tied,
And where with mony a blushing bud,
I strove myself to hide.

[1] Makes. [2] Go, roam. [3] Early. [4] Each. [5] I'll call it.

I'll doat on ilka[1] spot
Where I hae been wi' thee,
And ca' to mind some kindly word
By ilka burn and tree.

Wi' sic[2] thoughts i' my mind,
Time through the world may gae,
And find my heart in twenty years
The same as 'tis to-day.
'Tis thoughts that bind the soul,
And keep friends i' the e'e;
And gin[3] I think I see thee aye,
What can part thee and me?

[1] Every. [2] Such. [3] If.

AN EVENING:

IN NOVEMBER; IN A MOUNTAINOUS COUNTRY.

Ceas'd is the Rain: but heavy drops yet fall
From the drencht roof: yet murmurs the sunk wind
Round the dim hills—yet can a passage find
Whistling through yon cleft rock and ruin'd wall.
The swoln and angry torrents heard, appal,
Though distant.—A few stars, emerging kind,
Shed their green trembling beams.—With lustre small
The moon, her swiftly passing clouds behind,
Glides o'er the shaded Hill.—Now blasts remove
The shadowing clouds, and on the mountain's brow
Full orb'd she shines.—Half sunk within its cove
Heaves the lone boat with gulphing sound!—and lo,
Bright rolls the settling lake, and brimming rove
The vale's blue rills, and glitter as they flow.

RICH AULD WILLIE'S FAREWELL.

A FREEBOOTER, TAKEN BY THE ENGLISH IN A BORDER BATTLE, AND CONDEMNED TO BE EXECUTED.

FAREWELL, my ingle,[1] bleezing bright
When the snell[2] storm's begun;
My bouris casements, O! sae light!
When glints the bonny sun!

Farewell, my deep glens, speckt wi' sloes,
O' tangled hazels full!
Farewell, my thymy lea, where lowes
My kine, and glourin' bull.

Farewell, my red deer, jutting proud,
My rooks o' murky wing!
Farewell, my wee birds, lilting loud,
A' in the merry spring.

Farewell, my sheep, that sprattle on,
In a lang line, sae braw;
Or lie on yon cauld cliffs aboon,[3]
Like late-left patch o' snaw.[4]

[1] Fireside. [2] Biting. [3] Above. [4] Snow.

Farewell, my brook, that wimplin' rins,
My clattering brig[1] o' yew;
My scaly tribe wi' gowden[2] fins,
Sae nimbly flickering through!

Farewell, my boat, and lusty oars,
That scelp't[3] wi' muckle[4] spray!
Farewell, my birks[5] o' Teviot shores,
That cool the simmer[6] day!

Farewell, bauld[7] neighbours, whase swift steed
O'er Saxon bounds has scour'd,
Swoom'd[8] drumlie floods when moons were dead,
And ilka star was smoor'd.[9]

Maist dear for a' ye shared wi' me,
When skaith[10] and prey did goad,
And danger, like a wraith did flee
Alang our moon-dead road.

Farewell, my winsome wife, sae gay!
Fu' fain frae hame to gang,
Wi' spunkie[11] lads to geck and play,
The flow'rie haughs[12] amang!

[1] Bridge. [2] Golden. [3] S'ruck, splashed. [4] Big, much.
[5] Birches. [6] Summer. [7] Bold. [8] Swam muddy.
[9] Smothered. [10] Danger. [11] Sportive. [12] Meadows.

Farewell, my gowk,[1] thy warning note
Then aft-times ca'd aloud,
Tho' o' the word that thrilled thy throat,
Gude faith, I was na proud!

And, pawkie[2] gowk, sae free that mad'st
Or ere I hanged be,
Would I might learn if true thou saidst,
When sae thou saidst to me!

[1] Cuckoo. [2] Sly.

WRITTEN AT THE CLOSE OF SPRING.

The garlands fade that Spring so lately wove,
  Each simple flower which she has nurs'd in dew,
Anemonies, that spangled every grove,
  The primrose wan, and harebell mildly blue.
No more shall violets linger in the dell,
  Or purple orchis variegate the plain,
Till Spring again shall call forth every bell
  And dress with hurried hands her wreaths again.
Ah, poor humanity! so frail, so fair,
  And the fond visions of thy early day,
Till tyrant passion and corrosive care
  Bid all thy fairy colours flee away!
Another May new buds and flowers shall bring;
Ah! why has happiness no second spring?

AULD ROBIN GRAY.

When the sheep are in the fauld,[1] and the kye[2] at hame,
And a' the weary warld to rest are gane,
The waes of my heart fall in showers frae my e'e,
While my gudeman lies sound by me.

Young Jamie loe'd me well, and sought me for his bride;
But, saving a crown, he had naething mair beside.
To make the crown a pound, my Jamie gaed to sea!
And the crown and the pound were baith for me.

He hadna been awa a week, but only twa,
When my father brak his arm, and our cow was stawn[3] awa';
My mother she fell sick, and my Jamie at the sea,
An' auld Robin Gray came a-courting me.

My father couldna work, and my mother couldna spin,
I toiled day and night, but their bread I couldna win.
And Rob maintained them baith, and wi' tears in his e'e,
Said, "Jeanie, for their sakes, will you no marry me?"

[1] Fold. [2] Cows. [3] Stolen.

My heart it said na;—I looked for Jamie back,
But the wind it blew high, and the ship it was a wrack;
His ship it was a wrack. Why didna Jeanie dee?
Oh! why do I live to say, "Wae's me!"

My father argued sair, my mother didna speak,
But she looked in my face till my heart was like to break,
So she gied him my hand, though my heart was at the sea,
And Auld Robin Gray is gudeman to me.

I hadna been a wife a week, but only four,
When, mournful as I sat on the stane at the door,
I saw my Jamie's ghaist; I couldna think it he,
Till he said, "I'm come hame, my love, to marry thee:"

Oh, sair did we greet![1] and mickle[2] did we say;
I gi'ed him a kiss, and bade him gang awa'.
I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to dee,
O! why was I born to say, "Wae's me!"

I gang like a ghaist, an' I care not to spin;
I darena think on Jamie, for that would be a sin,
But I will do my best a gude wife to be,
For Auld Robin Gray he is kind to me.

[1] Weep. [2] Much.

ON A SPRIG OF HEATHER.

Flower of the waste! the heath-fowl shuns
For thee the brake and tangled wood—
To thy protecting shade she runs,
Thy tender buds supply her food;
Her young forsake her downy plumes,
To rest upon thy opening blooms.

Flower of the desert though thou art!
The deer that roam the mountain free,
The graceful doe, the stately hart,
Their food and shelter seek from thee;
The bee thy earliest blossom greets,
And draws from thee her choicest sweets.

Gem of the heath! whose modest bloom
Sheds beauty o'er the lonely moor;
Though thou dispense no rich perfume,
Nor yet with splendid tints allure,
Both valour's crest and beauty's bower,
Oft hast thou decked, a favourite flower.

Flower of the wild! whose purple glow
Adorns the dusky mountain's side,
Not the gay hues of Iris' bow,
Nor garden's artful varied pride,
With all its wealth of sweets could cheer,
Like thee the hardy mountaineer.

Flower of his heart! thy fragrance mild
  Of peace and freedom seem to breathe;
To pluck thy blossoms in the wild,
  And deck his bonnet with the wreath,
Where dwell of old his rustic sires
Is all his simple wish requires.

Flower of his dear-loved native land!
  Alas, when distant far more dear!
When he from some cold foreign strand,
  Looks homeward through the blinding tear,
How must his aching heart deplore,
That home and thee he sees no more.

O'ER THE MUIR AMANG THE HEATHER.

Comin' through the craigs o' Kyle,
Amang the bonnie bloomin' heather,
There I met a bonnie lassie
Keepin' a' her flocks thegither.

Ower the muir[1] amang the heather,
Ower the muir amang the heather,
There I met a bonnie lassie
Keepin' a' her flocks thegither.

Says I, my dear, where is thy hame?[2]
In muir or dale, pray tell me whither?
Says she, I tent the fleecy flocks
That feed amang the bloomin' heather.
Ower the muir, etc.

We laid us down upon a bank,
Sae warm and sunnie was the weather;
She left her flocks at large to rove
Among the bonnie bloomin' heather.
Ower the muir, etc.

She charmed my heart, and aye sinsyne[3]
I couldna think on ony ither;[4]
By sea and sky! she shall be mine,
The bonnie lass amang the heather.
Ower the muir, etc.

[1] Moor. [2] Home. [3] Ever since then. [4] Any other.

MY AIN FIRESIDE.

Oh ! I hae seen great anes[1], and sat in great ha's,[2]
'Mong lords and 'mong ladies a' covered wi' braws,[3]
At feasts made for princes, wi' princes I've been,
Where the grand shine o' splendour has dazzled my e'en ;
But a sight sae delightfu', I trow, I ne'er spied,
As the bonnie blythe blink o' my ain fireside.

My ain fireside, my ain fireside,
O cheery's the blink o' my ain fireside.
My ain fireside, my ain fireside,
O there's nought to compare wi' my ain fireside.

Ance mair, Gude be praised, round my ain hearthsome ingle,[4]
Wi' the friends o' my youth I cordially mingle ;
Nae forms to compel me to seem wae or glad,
I may laugh when I'm merry, and sigh when I'm sad ;
Nae falsehood to dread, and nae malice to fear,
But truth to delight me, and friendships to cheer ;
Of a' roads to happiness ever were tried,
There's nane half so sure as ane's ain fireside.

My ain fireside, my ain fireside,
O there's nought to compare wi' my ain fireside.

[1] Ones. [2] Halls. [3] Finery. [4] Fireside.

When I draw in my stool on my cosy hearthstane,
My heart loups[1] sae light I scarce ken't[2] for my ain,
Care's down on the wind, it is clean out o' sight,
Past troubles they seem but as dreams o' the night.
There but kind voices, kind faces I see,
And mark saft[3] affection glent[4] fond frae ilk e'e ;[5]
Nae fleechings o' flattery, nae boastings o' pride,
'Tis heart speaks to heart at ane's ain fireside.

My ain fireside, my ain fireside,
O cheery's the blink o' my ain fireside.
My ain fireside, my ain fireside,
O there's nought to compare wi' my ain fireside.

[1] Leaps. [2] Know it. [3] Soft. [4] Shines. [5] From each eye.

THE CHOUGH AND CROW.

THE chough and crow to roost are gone,
The owl sits on the tree,
The hush'd wind wails with feeble moan,
Like infant charity.
The wild fire dances on the fen,
The red star sheds its ray,
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men!
It is our opening day.

Both child and nurse are fast asleep,
And closed is every flower,
The winking tapers faintly peep
High from my lady's bower;
Bewildered hinds with shortened ken
Shrink in their murky way.
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men!
It is our opening day.

No board nor garner own we now,
Nor roof nor latched door,
Nor kind mate bound by holy vow
To bless a poor man's store;
Noon lulls us in a gloomy den,
And night has grown our day;
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men!
It is our opening day.

WOO'D AND MARRIED AND A'.

THE bride she is winsome and bonny,
Her hair it is snooded[1] sae sleek,
And faithfu' and kind is her Johnny,
Yet fast fa' the tears on her cheek.
New pearlins[2] are cause of her sorrow
New pearlins and plenishing[3] too ;
The bride that has a' to borrow,
Has e'en right mickle ado.[4]

Woo'd and married and a' !
Woo'd and married and a' !
Isna she very weel aff
To be woo'd and married and a' !

Her mither then hastily spak :
" The lassie is glaikit'[5] wi' pride,
In my pouch[6] I had never a plack[7]
The day that I was a bride.
E'en tak to your wheel and be clever,
And draw out your thread in the sun ;
The gear[8] that is gifted, it never
Will last like a gear that is won.

[1] Hooded. [2] Lace. [3] Furnishings. [4] Much to do. [5] Glaikit.
[6] Pocket. [7] Penny. [8] Goods.

Woo'd and married and a'!
Wi' havins[1] and tocher[2] sae sma'!
I think ye are very weel aff
To be woo'd and married and a'!"

"Toot! toot!" quo' her grey-headed faither,
"She's less of a bride than a bairn;
She's ta'en like a cout[3] frae the heather,
Wi' sense and discretion to learn.
Half husband, I trow, and half daddy,
As humour inconstantly leans,
The chiel[4] maun be patient and steady
That yokes wi' a mate in her teens.

A' kerchief sae douce and sae neat
O'er her locks that the wind used to blaw,
I'm baith like to laugh and to greet[5]
When I think o' her married at a'!"

Then out spak the wily bridegroom;
Weel waled[6] were his wordies I ween;
"I'm rich, though my coffer be toom,[7]
Wi' the blink o' your bonny blue e'en.[8]
I'm prouder of thee by my side,
Though thy ruffles and ribbons be few,
Than if Kate o' the Crafts were my bride,
Wi' purples and pearlies enow!

[1] Dress. [2] Dowry so small. [3] Colt. [4] Fellow. [5] Weep.
[6] Chosen. [7] Empty. [8] Eyes.

Dear and dearest of ony!
Ye're woo'd and beecket,[1] and a'!
And do you think scorn of your Johnny
And grieve to be married at a'?"

She turned, and she blushed, and she smiled,
And she lookit sae bashfully down;
The pride of her heart was beguiled,
And she played wi' the sleeve o' her gown.
She twirled the tag o' her lace,
And she nippit her bodice sae blue,
Syne[2] blinkit sae sweet in his face,
And aff, like a mawkin,[3] she flew.

Woo'd and married and a'!
Wi' Johnny to roose[4] her and a'!
She thinks hersel' very weel aff
To be woo'd and married and a'

[1] Housed. [2] Then. [3] Rabbit. [4] Extol.

"TAM O' THE LIN."

Tam o' the Lin was fu' o' pride,
And his weapon he girt to his valorous side,
A scabbard of leather wi' de'il hair't[1] within,
"Attack me wha daur!" quo' Tam o' the Lin.

Tam o' the Lin, he bought a maer;[2]
She cost him five shillings, she wasna dear;
Her back stuck up, and her sides fell in,
"A fiery yaud[3]!" quo' Tam o' the Lin.

Tam o' the Lin, he courted a May;
She stared at him sourly, and said him nay;
But he stroked down his jerkin, and cocked up his chin,
"She aims at a laird, then!" quo' Tam o' the Lin.

Tam o' the Lin, he gaed to the fair,
Yet he looked wi' disdain on the chapman's ware;
Then chucked out a sixpence, the sixpence was tin,
"There's coin for the fiddlers," quo' Tam o' the Lin.

Tam o' the Lin wad show his lear,[4]
And he scained[5] o'er the book wi' wise-like stare;
He muttered confusedly, but didna begin,
"This is Dominie's business," quo' Tam o' the Lin.

[1] A bit. [2] Mare. [3] Jade. [4] Learning. [5] Conned.

Tam o' the Lin had a cow wi' ae horn,
That likit to feed on his neighbour's corn ;
The stanes he threw at her fell short o' the skin,
"She's a lucky auld reiver[1]," quo' Tam o' the Lin.

Tam o' the Lin, he married a wife,
And she was the torment, the plague of his life ;
She lays so about her and makes sic a din,
"She frightens the baby," quo' Tam o' the Lin.

Tam o' the Lin grew dowie and douce,[2]
And he sat on a stane at the end o' his house ;
"What ails, auld chield!" he looked haggard and thin,
"I'm no very cheery," quo' Tam o' the Lin.

Tam o' the Lin lay down to die,
And his friends whispered softly and wofully :
"We'll buy you some masses to scour away sin,"
"And drink at my lyke-wake[3]," quo' Tam o' the Lin.

[1] Robber. [2] Sad and sedate. [3] The watching a dead body.

THE WEARY PUND O' TOW.

A YOUNG gudewife is in my house,
And thrifty means to be;
But aye she's rinnin' to the town
Some ferlie[1] there to see.

The weary pund, the weary pund,
The weary pund o' tow!
I soothly think, ere it be spun,
I'll wear a lyart pow.[2]

And when she sets her to her wheel
To draw the threads wi' care,
In comes the chapman[3] wi' his gear,
And she can spin nae mair.
The weary pund, etc.

And she, like mony merry May,
At fairs maun still be seen,
At kirkyard preaching, near the tent,
At dances on the green.
The weary pund, etc.

[1] Wonder. [2] Grey head. [3] Pedlar.

Her dainty ear a fiddle charms,
A bagpipe's her delight,
But for the croonings of her wheel
She doesna care a mite.
The weary pund, etc.

You spak, my Kate, of snow-white webs
Made of your linkum-twine,
But ah! I fear our bonnie burn[1]
Will ne'er lave[2] web of thine.
The weary pund, etc.

Nay, smile again, my winsome Kate,
Sic jibings mean nae ill;
Should I gae sarkless[3] to my grave,
I'll lo'e and bless thee still.

The weary pund, the weary pund,
The weary pund o' tow!
I soothly think, ere it be spun,
I'll wear a lyart pow.

[1] Stream. [2] Wash. [3] Shirtless.

THE DEATH OF ETHWALD.

FROM "ETHWALD," A TRAGEDY.

ACT V.—SCENE 5.

ETHWALD'S *apartment. He is discovered sitting by his couch, with his elbows resting upon his knees, and supporting his head between both his hands; the* QUEEN *standing by him.*

. . . . . .

Ethw. (*listening with alarm.*) Hark! someone comes.
Queen. Be not disturb'd, it is your faithful groom
Who brings the watch-dog; all things are secure.
Ethw. Nay, but I heard the sound of other feet.
[*Running to the door, and pushing in a great bar.*
Say, who art thou without?
Voice without. Your groom, my lord, who brings your faithful dog.
Ethw. (*to Queen.*) Didst thou not hear the sound of other feet?
Queen. No, only his; your mind is too suspicious.
Ethw. I in his countenance have mark'd of late
That which I liked not: were this dreary night
But once o'ermaster'd, he shall watch no more.
[*Opens the door suspiciously, and enters an armed man leading in a great watch-dog; the door is shut again hastily, and the bar is replaced.*

(*To the dog.*) Come, rough and surly friend!
Thou only dost remain on whom my mind
Can surely trust. I'll have more dogs so trained.
[*Looking steadfastly at groom.*
Thy face is pale: thou hast a haggard look:
Where hast thou been? [*Seizing him by the neck.*
Answer me quickly! Say, where hast thou been?

Gr. Looking upon the broad and fearful sky.

Queen. What say'st thou?

Gr. The heavens are all a-flaming o'er our heads,
And fiery spears are shivering through the air.

Ethw. Hast thou seen this?

Gr. Ay, by our holy saint!

Queen. It is some prodigy, dark and portentous.

Gr. A red and bloody mantle seems outstretch'd
O'er the wide welkin, and——

Ethw. Peace, damned fool!
Tell me no more: be to thy post withdrawn.

[*Exit groom by a small side door, leading the dog with him*

Ethw. (*To himself, after musing for some time.*)
Heaven warring o'er my head, there is in this
Some fearful thing betoken'd.
If that, in truth, the awful term is come,
The fearful boundary of my mortal reach,
O'er which I must into those regions pass
Of horror and despair, to take my place
With those who do their blood-earn'd crowns exchange
For ruddy circles of devouring fire:
Where hopeless woe, and gnashing agony
Writhe in the dens of torment; where things be
Yet never imaged in the thoughts of man,
Dark, horrible, unknown ——
I'll mantle o'er my head, and think no more.

Covers his head with his cloak, and sinks down upon the couch.

Queen. Nay, rather stretch you on the fleecy bed.

Ethw. Rest, if you canst, I do not hinder thee.

Queen. Then truly I will lean my head awhile,
I am o'erspent and weary. [*Leans on the couch.*

Ethw. (*hastily uncovering his face.*) Thou must not sleep:
watch with me and be silent:
It is an awful hour!

[*A long pause: then* ETHWALD *starting up from his couch with alarm.*]

I hear strange sounds ascend the winding stairs.

Queen. I hear them, too.

Ethw. Ha! thou dost also hear it?.
Then it is real. (*listening.*) I hear the clash of arms.
Ho! guard, come forth.

Re-enter GROOM.

Go, rouse my faithful dog.
Dark treason is upon us.

Gr. (*disappearing and then re-entering.*) He sleeps so sound, my lord, I cannot rouse him.

Ethw. Then, villain, I'm betray'd! thou hast betray'd me!
But set that brawny strength against that door,
And bar them out: if thou but seem'st to flinch,
This sword is in thy heart.

[*A noise of armed men is now heard at the door, endeavouring to break it open, whilst* ETHWALD *and the* Groom *set their shoulders to it to prevent it. Enter* DWINA *hastily from an inner apartment, and with the* QUEEN *assists in putting their strengths also against the door, as the force without increases. The door is at last broken open, and* HERUELF, *with the rebel chiefs, burst in, sword in hand.*

Her. (*to* ETHWALD.) Now, thou fell ruthless lion, thou hast made
With bloody rage thy native forest waste!

The spearmen are upon thee! to the strife
Turn thy rough breast: thou canst no more escape.

Ethw. Quick to thy villain's work, thou wordy coward,
Who in the sick man's chamber seek'st the fame
Thou darst not in th' embattled field attain!
I am prepared to front thee and thy mates,
Were ye twice numbered o'er.

[*Sets his back to a pillar, and puts himself in a posture of defence.*

Her. The sick man's chamber! darest thou, indeed,
Begrimed as thou art with blood and crimes
'Gainst man committed, human rights assume?
Thou art a hideous and envenom'd snake,
Whose wounded length even in his noisome hole,
Men fiercely hunt, for love of human kind;
And wert thou scotch'd to the last ring of life,
E'en that poor remnant of thy curs'd existence,
Should be trod out in dust.

Ethw. Come on, thou boasting fool! give thy sword work,
And spare thy cursed tongue.

Her. Ay, surely will I!
It is the sword of noble Ethelbert:
Its master's blood weighs down its heavy stroke;
His unseen hand directs them.

[*They fight:* ETHWALD *defends himself furiously, but at last falls, and the conspirators raise a loud shout.*

1*st. Ch.* Bless heaven, the work is done!

2*nd. Ch.* Now Mercia is reveng'd, and free-born men
May rest their toil'd limbs in their peaceful homes.

3*rd Ch. (going nearer the body.)* Ha! does he groan?

2*nd Ch.* No, he dies sullenly, and to the wall
Turns his wither'd form and death-distorted visage.

[*A solemn pause, whilst* ETHWALD, *after some convulsive motions, expires.*]

Her. Now hath his loaded soul gone to its place,
And ne'er a pitying voice from all his kind
Cries "God have mercy on him!"

3rd Ch. I've vow'd to dip my weapon in his blood.

1st Ch. And so have I.

[*Several of them advancing with their swords towards the body, a young man steps forth and stretches out his arm to keep them off.*

Young Man. My father in the British war was seiz'd
A British prisoner, and with all he had
Unto a Mercian chief by lot consign'd;
Mine aged grandsire, lowly at his feet,
Rent his grey hair; Ethwald, a youthful warrior,
Received the old man's prayer and set him free;
Yea even to the last heifer of his herds
Restor'd his wealth.
For this good deed, do not insult the fallen,
He was not ruthless once.

THE LAND O' THE LEAL.

I'M wearin' awa', John,
Like snaw wreaths in thaw, John,
I'm wearin' awa'
To the land o' the leal.

There's nae sorrow there, John,
There's neither cauld nor care, John,
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, John,
She was baith gude and fair, John,
And oh! we grudged her sair
To the land o' the leal.

But sorrow's sel' wears past, John,
And joy is comin' fast, John,
The joy that's aye to last,
In the land o' the leal.

Sae dear that joy was bought, John,
Sae free the battle fought, John,
That sinfu' man e'er brought
To the land o' the leal.

Oh, dry your glist'ning e'e, John,
My soul langs to be free, John,
And angels beckon me
To the land o' the leal.

Oh ! haud ye leal and true, John,
Your day it's wearing through, John,
And I'll welcome you
To the land o' the leal.

Now, fare ye well, my ain John,
This world's cares are vain, John,
We'll meet, and we'll be fain
In the land o' the leal.

CALLER[1] HERRIN'.

WHA'LL buy my caller herrin'?
They're bonnie fish and halesome farin';
Wha'll buy my caller herrin',
New drawn frae the Forth?

When ye were sleepin' on your pillows,
Dreamed ye aught o' our puir fellows,
Darkling as they faced the billows,
A' to fill the woven willows?
Buy my caller herrin',
New drawn frae the Forth.

Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?
They're no brought here without brave darin',
Buy my caller herrin',
Haul'd thro' wind and rain.
Wha'll buy my caller herrin'? etc.

Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?
Oh, ye may ca'[2] them vulgar farin';
Wives and mithers maist[3] despairin',
Ca' them lives o' men.
Wha'll buy my caller herrin'? etc.

[1] Fresh. [2] Call. [3] Most.

When the creel o' herrin' passes,
Ladies, clad in silks and laces,
Gather in their braw[1] pelisses,
Cast their heads and screw their faces.
Wha'll buy my caller herrin'? etc.

Caller herrin's no got lightlie,
Ye can trip the spring fu' tightlie;
Spite o' taunting, flauntin', flingin',
Gow* has set you a' a-singin'.
Wha'll buy my caller herrin'? etc.

Neebour wives, now tent[2] my tellin',
When the bonnie fish ye're sellin',
At ae[3] word be in your dealin'—
Truth will stand when a' thing's failin'.
Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?
They're bonnie fish and wholesome farin';
Wha'll buy my caller herrin',
New drawn frae the Forth?

[1] Fine. [2] Attend. [3] One.

* A celebrated fiddler, who compiled a collection of Scotch Reels, Pibrochs, and Strathspeys, etc.

THE AULD HOUSE.

Oh, the auld house, the auld house,
What tho' the rooms were wee!
Oh, kind hearts were dwelling there,
And bairnies fu' o' glee.
The wild rose and the jessamine
Still hang upon the wa',[1]
How mony cherished memories
Do they, sweet flowers, reca'!

Oh, the auld laird, the auld laird!
Sae canty,[2] kind, and crouse,[3]
How mony did he welcome to
His ain wee dear auld house!
And the leddy too, sae genty,
There sheltered Scotland's heir,
And clipt a lock wi' her ain hand
Frae his lang yellow hair.

The mavis[4] still doth sweetly sing,
The blue-bells sweetly blaw,
The bonny Earn's clear winding still,
But the auld house is awa'.

[1] Wall. [2] Shrewd. [3] Jovial. [4] Thrush

The auld house, the auld house,
Deserted though ye be,
There ne'er can be a new house
Will seem sae fair to me.

Still flourishing the auld pear-tree
The bairnies liked to see,
And oh, how often did they speir[1]
When they ripe a' wad be!
The voices sweet, the wee bit feet
Aye rinnin' here and there,
The merry shout—oh! whiles we greet
To think we'll hear nae mair?

For they are a' wide scattered now,
Some to the Indies gane,
And ane, alas! to her lang hame;
Not here we'll meet again.
The kirkyaird[2], the kirkyaird!
Wi' flowers of every hue,
Sheltered by the holly's shade
An' the dark sombre yew.

The setting sun, the setting sun,
How glorious it gaed doon!
The cloudy splendour raised our hearts
To cloudless skies aboon!
The auld dial, the auld dial!
It tauld how time did pass;
The wintry winds hae dung it doon,[3]
Now hid 'mang weeds and grass.

[1] Ask [2] Churchyard. [3] Have flung it down.

THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN.

THE Laird o' Cockpen, he's proud an' he's great,
His mind is ta'en up wi' things o' the State;
He wanted a wife his braw[1] house to keep,
But favour wi' wooin' was fashious[2] to seek.

Down by the dyke-side a lady did dwell,
At his table-head he thought she'd look well—
McClish's ae[3] daughter o' Claverse-ha'-Lee,
A penniless lass wi' a lang pedigree.

His wig was well pouthered and as gude as new,
His waistcoat was white, and his coat it was blue;
He put on a ring, a sword, and cock'd hat—
And wha could refuse the laird wi' a' that!

He took the grey mare and rade cannily,[4]
An' rapped at the gate o' Claverse-ha'-Lee:
"Gae tell mistress Jean to come speedily ben,[5]
She's wanted to speak to the Laird o' Cockpen."

Mistress Jean was makin' the elder-flower wine:
"An' what brings the Laird at sic a like time?"
She put aff her apron and on her silk gown,
Her mutch[6] wi' red ribbons, an' gaed[7] awa' doon.

[1] Fine. [2] Vexatious. [3] One. [4] Rode cautiously. [5] In. [6] Cap. [7] Went.

An' when she cam ben he bowed fu' low,
An' what was his errand he soon let her know;
Amazed was the laird when the lady said "Na,[1]"
And wi' a laigh[2] curtsie she turned awa'.

Dumfoundered he was, nae sigh did he gie,[3]
He mounted his mare, and rade cannily;
And aften he thought, as he gaed thro' the glen,
She's daft[4] to refuse the Laird o' Cockpen.

[1] No. [2] Light. [3] Give. [4] Crazy.

WHA'LL[1] BE KING BUT CHARLIE?

THE news frae Moidart cam' yestreen[2]
Will soon gar mony ferlie;[3]
The ships o' war hae just come in
And landit Royal Charlie.

Come through the heather, around him gather,
Ye're a' the welcomer early;
Around him cling wi' a' your kin;
For wha'll be king but Charlie?
Come through the heather, around him gather,
Come Ronald, come Donald, come a' thegither,
And crown your rightfu', lawfu' king!
For wha'll be king but Charlie?

The Hieland clans, wi' sword in hand,
Frae John o' Groats to Airlie,
Hae to a man declared to stand
Or fa' with Royal Charlie.
Come through the heather, etc.

The Lowlands a', baith great an' sma',
Wi' mony a lord and laird, hae
Declared for Scotia's King and law,
And speir[4] ye wha but Charlie.
Come through the heather, etc.

[1] Who. [2] Yesterday. [3] Make many wonder. [4] Ask.

There's ne'er a lass in a' the lan'
  But vows, baith late an' early,
She'll ne'er to man gie heart nor han'
  Wha wadna fecht[1] for Charlie.
    Come through the heather, etc.

Then here's a health to Charlie's cause,
  And be't complete an' early,
His very name our heart-blood warms
  To arms for Royal Charlie!

Come through the heather, around him gather,
  Ye're a' the welcomer early;
Around him cling wi' a' your kin,
  For wha'll be king but Charlie?
Come through the heather, around him gather,
Come Ronald, come Donald, come a' thegither,
And crown your rightfu', lawfu', king!
  For wha'll be king but Charlie?

[1] Fight.

WRITTEN AT KILLARNEY.

JULY 27, 1800.

How soft the pause! the notes melodious cease,
Which from each feeling could an echo call;
Rest on your oars, that not a sound may fall
To interrupt the stillness of our peace:
The fanning west-wind breathes upon our cheeks,
Yet glowing with the sun's departed beams.
Through the blue heavens the cloudless moon pours streams
Of pure resplendent light, in silver streaks
Reflected on the still, unruffle l lake.
The Alpine hills in solemn silence frown,
While the dark woods night's deepest shades embrown.
And now once more the soothing strain awake!
Oh, ever to my heart, with magic power,
Shall those sweet sounds recall this rapturous hour!

THE LILY.

How withered, perished, seems the form
  Of yon obscure unsightly root!
Yet from the blight of wintry storm
  It hides secure the precious fruit.

The careless eye can find no grace,
  No beauty in the scaly folds,
Nor see within the dark embrace
  What latent loveliness it holds.

Yet in that bulb, those sapless scales,
  The lily wraps her silver vest,
Till vernal suns and vernal gales
  Shall kiss once more her fragrant breast.

Yes, hide beneath the mouldering heap
  The undelighting slighted thing;
There in the cold earth buried deep
  In silence let it wait the Spring.

Oh! many a stormy night shall close
  In gloom upon the barren earth,
While still, in undisturbed repose,
  Uninjured lies the future birth:

And Ignorance, with sceptic eye,
Hope's patient smile shall wondering view:
Or mock her fond credulity,
As her soft tears the spot bedew.

Sweet smile of hope, delicious tear!
The sun, the shower indeed shall come;
The promised verdant shoot appear,
And nature bid her blossoms bloom.

And thou, O virgin queen of Spring!
Shalt, from thy dark and lowly bed,
Bursting thy green sheath's silken string,
Unveil thy charms and perfume shed;

Unfold thy robes of purest white,
Unsullied from their darksome grave,
And thy soft petals' silvery light
In the mild breeze unfettered wave.

So Faith shall seek the lowly dust
Where humble Sorrow loves to lie,
And bid her thus her hopes intrust,
And watch with patient, cheerful eye;

And bear the long, cold wintry night,
And bear her own degraded doom;
And wait till Heaven's reviving light,
Eternal Spring! shall burst the gloom.

TO HOPE.

O EVER skilled to wear the form we love!
To bid the shapes of fear and grief depart;
Come, gentle Hope! with one gay smile remove
The lasting sadness of an aching heart.
Thy voice, benign enchantress! let me hear;
Say that for me some pleasures yet shall bloom,—
That fancy's radiance, friendship's precious tear,
Shall soften, or shall chase, misfortune's gloom.
But come not glowing in the dazzling ray
Which once with dear illusions charmed my eye;
O, strew no more, sweet flatterer! on my way
The flowers I fondly thought too bright to die:
Visions less fair will soothe my pensive breast,
That asks not happiness, but longs for rest.

THE SUMMER'S CALL.

COME away! The sunny hours
Woo thee far to founts and bowers!
O'er the very waters now,
In their play,
Flowers are shedding, beauties glow--
Come away!
Where the lilies' tender gleam
Quivers on the glancing stream,
Come away!

All the air is filled with sound,
Soft, and sultry, and profound;
Murmurs through the shadowy grass
Lightly stray;
Faint winds whisper as they pass,
Come away!
Where the bee's deep music swells
From the trembling foxglove bells,
Come away!

In the skies the sapphire blue
Now hath won its richest hue;
In the woods the breath of song
Sheds a ray,

Dreamy, starry, greenly bright—
Come away!
Where the boughs with dewy gloom
Darken each thick bed of bloom,
Come away!

In the deep heart of the rose
Now the crimson love-hue glows;
Now the glow-worm's lamp by night
Sheds a ray,
Dreamy, starry, greenly bright—
Come away!
Where the fairy cup-moss lies
With the wild-wood strawberries,
Come away!

Now each tree by summer crown'd
Sheds its own rich twilight round;
Glancing there from sun to shade,
Bright wings play;
There the deer its couch hath made,
Come away!
Where the smooth leaves of the lime
Glisten in their honey-time,
Come away—away!

THE TREASURES OF THE DEEP.

WHAT hidest thou in thy treasure caves and cells,
Thou hollow sounding and mysterious main?—
Pale, glistening pearls, and rainbow-coloured shells,
Bright things which gleam unrecked of, and in vain.
Keep, keep thy riches, melancholy sea!
We ask not such from thee.

Yet more, the depths have more! What wealth untold,
Far down, and shining through their stillness lies!
Thou hast the starry gems, the burning gold,
Won from ten thousand royal argosies.—
Sweep o'er thy spoils, thou wild and wrathful main!
Earth claims not *these* again.

Yet more, the depths have more! Thy waves have rolled
Above the cities of a world gone by!
Sand hath filled up the palaces of old,
Sea-weed o'ergrown the halls of revelry.—
Dash o'er them, Ocean! in thy scornful play:
Man yields them to decay.

Yet more! the billows and the depths have more!
High hearts and brave are gathered to thy breast!
They hear not now the booming waters roar,
The battle thunders will not break their rest.—
Keep thy red gold and gems, thou stormy grave!
Give back the true and brave!

Give back the lost and lovely!—those for whom
The place was kept at board and health so long,
The prayer went up through midnight's breathless gloom,
And the vain yearning woke midst festal song!
Hold fast thy buried isles, thy towers o'erthrown,
But all is not thine own.

To thee the love of woman hath gone down,
Dark flow thy tides o'er manhood's noble head,
O'er youth's bright locks, and beauty's flowery crown;
Yet must thou hear a voice—Restore the dead!
Earth shall reclaim her precious things from thee!—
Restore the dead, thou sea!

From "THE FOREST SANCTUARY."

LXXVII.

A mighty minster, dim, and proud, and vast!
Silence was round the sleepers whom its floor
Shut in the grave; a shadow of the past,
A memory of the sainted steps that wore
Erewhile its gorgeous pavement, seemed to brood
Like mist upon the stately solitude;
A halo of sad fame to mantle o'er
Its white sepulchral forms of mail-clad men;
And all was hushed as night in some deep alpine glen.

LXXVIII.

More hushed, far more!—for there the wind sweeps by!
Or the woods tremble to the stream's loud play;
Here a strange echo made my very sigh
Seem for the place too much a sound of day!
Too much my footsteps brook the moonlight, fading,
Yet arch through arch in one soft flow pervading,
And I stood still: prayer, chant had died away;
Yet past me floated a funereal breath
Of incense. I stood still—as before God and death.

LXXIX.

For thick ye gird me round, ye long departed!
Dust-imaged forms—with cross, and shield, and crest.
It seemed as if your ashes would have started
Had a wild voice burst forth above your rest!
Yet ne'er, perchance, did worshipper of yore
Bear to your thrilling presence what *I* bore
Of wrath, doubt, anguish, battling in the breast
I could have poured words, on that pale air,
To make your proud tombs ring. No, no, I could not *there.*

LXXX.

Not midst those aisles, through which a thousand years,
Mutely as clouds, and reverently, had swept;
Not by those shrines, which yet the trace of tears
And kneeling votaries on their marble kept!
Ye were too mighty in your pomp of gloom
And trophied aye, O temple, altar, tomb!
And you, ye dead!—for in that faith ye slept,
Whose weight had grown a mountain's on my heart,
Which could not *there* be loosed. I turned me to depart.

LXXXI.

I turned: what glimmered faintly on my sight—
Faintly, yet brightening as a wreath of snow
Seen through dissolving haze? The moon, the night,
Had waned, and down poured in—grey, shadowy, slow,

Yet dayspring still! a solemn hue it caught,
Piercing the storied windows darkly fraught
With stoles and draperies of imperial glow;
And, soft and sad that coloured gleam was thrown
Where, pale, a pictured form above the altar shone.

LXXXII.

Thy form, Thou Son of God!—a wrathful deep,
With foam, and cloud, and tempest round Thee spread,
And such a weight of night!—a night, when sleep
From the fierce rocking of the billows fled.
A bark showed dim beyond Thee, with its mast
Bowed, and its rent sail shivering to the blast;
But, like a spirit in Thy gliding tread,
Thou, as o'er glass, didst walk that stormy sea
Through rushing winds, which left a silent path for Thee.

LXXXIII.

So still Thy white robes fell!—no breath of air
Within their long and slumberous folds had sway.
So still the waves of parted shadowy hair
From Thy clear brow flowed droopingly away!
Dark were the heavens above Thee, Saviour!—dark
The gulfs, Deliverer! round the straining bark!
But Thou! o'er all Thine aspect and array
Was poured one stream of pale, broad, silvery light:
Thou were the single star of that all-shrouding night!

A BALLAD OF MEMORIE.

Nae mair, alas! nae mair I'll see
  Young mornin's gowden[1] hair
Spread o'er the lift[2]—the dawnin' sheen
  O' simmer mornin' fair!
Nae mair the heathery knowe[3] I'll speel,
  An' see the sunbeams glancin',
Like fire-flauchts ower the loch's lane breast,
  Ower whilk[4] the breeze is dancin'.

Nae mair I'll wanner ower the braes,
  Or thro' the birken shaw,[5]
An' pu' the wild-wud flowers amang
  Thy lanely glens, Roseha'!
How white the haw, how red the rose,
  How blue the hy'cinth bell,
Whaur fairy thim'les woo the bees
  In Tenach's breckan dell!

Nae mair when hinnysuckle hings
  Her garlands on the trees,
And hinny breath o' heather bells
  Comes glaffin' on the breeze;
Nor whan the burstin' birken buds,
  And sweetly scented brier,
Gi'e oot their sweets, nae power they ha'e
  My dowie heart to cheer.

[1] Golden. [2] Air, sky. [3] Knoll. [4] Which. [5] Birch-wood.

Nae mair I'll hear the cushie-doo,[1]
Wi' voice o' tender wailin',
Pour out her plaint; nor laverock's[2] sang,
Up 'mang the white clouds sailin';
The lappin' waves that kiss the shore,
The music o' the streams,
The roarin' o' the linn nae mair
I'll hear but in my dreams.

Whan a' the hoose are gane to sleep
I sit my leefu'[3] lane,
An' muse till fancy streaks her wing,
An' I am young again.
Again I wanner thro' the wuds,
Again I seem to sing
Some waefu' auld-warld ballant strain,
Till a' the echoes ring.

Again the snaw-white howlit's wing
Out ower my heid is flaffin',
When frae her nest 'mang Calder craigs
I fley't[4] her wi' my daffin';[5]
An' keekin'[6] in the mavis'[7] nest
O naked scuddies[8] fu',
I feed wi' moolins[9] out my pouch
Ilk gapin' hungry mou.[10]

[1] Wood-dove. [2] Lark. [3] Joyful, happy. [4] Frighten, startle.
[5] Merriment. [6] Peeping. [7] Thrush. [8] Nude. [9] Crumbs.
[10] Mouth.

Again I wanner ower the lea,
"An' pu' the gowans[1] fine;
Again I paidle[2] in the burn,"
But, oh, its lang-sin-syne![3]
Again your faces blythe I see,
Your gladsome voices hear—
Frien's o' my youth—a' gane, a' gane!
An' I sit blinlins[4] here.

The star o' memory lichts the past;
But there's a licht abune[5]
To cheer the darkness o' a life
That maun be endit sune.
An' aft I think the gowden morn,
The purple gloamin'[6] fa',
Will shine as bricht, an' fa' as saft,
Whan I hae gane awa'.

[1] Daisies. [2] Paddle. [3] Long-since-then.
[4] Blind. [5] Above. [6] Twilight.

THE WAY O' THE WARL'.[1]

It's the Way o' the Warl' when your troubles are sair,
An' yer doon i' the dirt, aye tae tramp ye the mair;
Ye may warsle[2] and grane,[3] ye may murther an' cry,
Wi' a glunch[4] or a sneer she will gang her wa's by!

It's the Way o' the Warl' tae think maist o' braid-claith
An' the weel-plenisht purse—oh, hoo weel she likes baith!
The thin ragged doublet she canna weel thole,[5]
An' she ne'er could pit up wi' a pouch an' a hole!

It's the Way o' the Warl' aye tae soun' weel the fame—
Nae odds hoo he gat it—o' the chiel[6] wi' a name;
But the nameless, though giftit, are caul'[7] i' the yird,
Ere a sang or a word i' their praise she wull mird!

Then maybe she'll say, when he's streekit[8] and caul'—
"Puir chiel! I aye thocht him a gude kin' o' saul;"[9]
And syne ower[10] his grave she'll big a wheen stanes,[11]
An' sit on the tap o't, and greet[12] ower his banes!

[1] World. [2] Struggle. [3] Groan. [4] Glance.
[5] Suffer. [6] Fellow. [7] Cold. [8] Stretched.
[9] Soul. [10] Then. [11] Pile of stones. [12] Cry.

Noo, yer Way wi' the Warl's jist tae let her alane,
Ne'er fash her wi' yammerin'[1]—ne'er mak' ye a mane,[2]
Ne'er haud up yersel' an' yer sairs tae her een—
She's ower thrang[3] wi' hersel', an' she cares na a preen![4]

Just keep ye yersel', an' there's Ane that wull help:
When the warl' steeks[5] ye oot, ne'er sit down an' yelp
Like a doug, but bear bauldly yer heid, like a man—
Keep yer e'e and yer hert aye abune gif ye can!

Noo, Warl', hae I wrang't thee?—thou kens best thysel';
Let them that hae try't thee an' lippen't[6] thee tell;
But, hark i' yer lug,[7] my puir hard-workin' brither,
Lippen aye maist tae Heaven, tae yersel', an' yer mither.

[1] Grumbling. [2] Moan [3] Taken up. [4] Pin. [5] Shuts. [6] Listen. [7] Ear.

PHANTASMION'S QUEST OF IARINE.

Yon changeful cloud will soon thy aspect wear,
So bright it grows:—and now, by light winds shaken,—
O ever seen yet ne'er to be o'ertaken!—
Those waving branches seem thy billowy hair.

The cypress glades recall thy pensive air;
Slow rills that wind like snakes amid the grass,
Thine eye's mild sparkle fling me as they pass,
Yet murmuring cry, *This fruitless Quest forbear!*

Nay e'en amid the cataract's loud storm,
  Where foaming torrents from the crags are leaping,
Methinks I catch swift glimpses of thy form,
  Thy robe's light folds in airy tumult sweeping;
Then silent are the falls: 'mid colours warm,
  Gleams the bright maze beneath their splendour sweeping.

SONG.

FROM "PHANTASMION."

How high yon lark is heavenward borne!
Yet, ere again she hails the morn,
Beyond where birds can wing their way,
Our souls may soar to endless day,
May hear the heavenly quires rejoice,
While earth still echoes to her voice.

A waveless flood supremely bright,
Has drown'd the myriad isles of light;
But ere, that ocean ebbed away,
The shadowy gulfs their forms betray,
Above the stars our course may run,
'Mid beams unborrow'd from the sun.

In this day's light what flowers will bloom,
What insects quit the self-made womb!
But ere the bud its leaves unfold,
The gorgeous fly his plumes of gold,
On fairer wings we too may glide,
Where youth and joy no ills betide.

Then come, while yet we linger here,
Fit thoughts for that celestial sphere,
A heart which under keenest light,
May bear the gaze of spirits bright,
Who all things know, and nought endure
That is not holy, just, and pure.

ZELNETH'S LAMENT.

FROM "PHANTASMION."

By the storm invaded
Ere thy arch was wrought,
Rainbow, thou hast faded
Like a gladsome thought,
And ne'er mayst shine aloft in all earth's colours fraught.

Insect tranced for ever
In thy pendent bed,
Which the breezes sever
From its fragile thread,
Thou ne'er shalt burst thy cell and crumpled pinions spread.

Lily born and nourish'd
'Mid the waters cold,
Where thy green leaves flourish'd,
On the sunburnt mould
How canst thou rear thy stem and sallow buds unfold?

Snowy cloud suspended
O'er the orb of light,
With its radiance blended
Ne'er to glisten bright,
It sinks, and thou grow'st black beneath the wings of night.

LINES ON THE COMMON SAYING THAT LOVE IS BLIND.

PASSION is blind, not Love: *her* wond'rous might
Informs with threefold pow'r man's inward sight:—
To her deep glance the soul at large display'd
Shews all its mingled mass of light and shade:—
Then call her blind when she but turns her head,
Nor scans the fault for which her tears are shed.
Can dull Indifference or Hate's troubled gaze
See through the secret heart's mysterious maze?—
Can Scorn and Envy pierce "that dread abode,"
Where true faults rest beneath the eye of God?
Not theirs, 'mid inward darkness, to discern
The spiritual splendours how they shine and burn.
All bright endowments of a noble mind
They, who with joy behold them, soonest find;
And better now its stains of frailty know
Than they who fain would see it white as snow.

THE UNKNOWN GRAVE.

THERE is a little unknown grave
Which no one comes to see,
The foxglove and red orchis wave
Their welcome to the bee.
There never falls the morning sun,
It lies beneath the wall,
But there when weary day is done
The lights of sunset fall,
Flushing the warm and crimson air,
As life and hope were present there.

There sleepeth one who left his heart
Behind him in his song;
Breathing of that diviner part
Which must to heaven belong,
The language of those spirit chords,
But to the poet known,
Youth, love, and hope yet use his words,
They seem to be his own:
And yet he hath not left a name,
The poet died without his fame.

How many are the lovely lays
That haunt our English tongue;

Defrauded of their poet's praise,
  Forgotten he who sung.
Tradition only vaguely keeps
  Sweet fancies round his tomb;
Its tears are what the wild flower weeps,
  Its record is that bloom;
Ah, surely nature keeps with her
The memory of her worshipper.

One of her loveliest mysteries
  Such spirits blends at last,
With all the fairy fantasies
  Which o'er some scenes are cast:
A softer beauty fills the grove,
  A light is in the grass,
A deeper sense of truth and love
  Comes o'er us as we pass;
While lingers in the heart one line
The nameless poet hath a shrine.

THE FROZEN SHIP.

THE fair ship cut the billows,
And her path lay white behind,
And dreamily amid her sails
Scarce moved the sleeping wind

The sailors sang their gentlest songs,
Whose words were home and love;
Waveless the wide sea spread beneath—
And calm the heaven above.

But as they sung, each voice turn'd low,
Albeit they knew not why;
For quiet was the waveless sea,
And cloudless was the sky.

But the clear air was cold as clear;
'Twas pain to draw the breath;
And silence and the chill around
Were e'en like those of death.

Colder and colder grew the air,
Spell-bound seem'd the waves to be;
And ere night fell, they knew they were lock'd
In the arms of that icy sea.

Stiff lay the sail, chain-like the ropes,
And snow passed o'er the main;
Each thought but none spoke of distant home
They never should see again.

Each look'd upon his comrade's face
Pale as funereal stone;
Yet none could touch the other's hand,
For none could feel his own.

Like statues fix'd, that gallant band
Stood on the dread deck to die;
The sheet was their shroud, the wind their dirge,
And their churchyard the sea and the sky.

Fond eyes watch'd by their native shore,
And prayers to the wild winds gave;
But never again came that stately ship
To breast the English wave.

Hope grew fear, and fear grew hope,
Till both alike were done:
And the bride lay down in her grave alone,
And the mother without her son.

Years pass'd, and of that goodly ship
Nothing of tidings came;
Till, in after time when her fate had grown
But a tale of fear and a name——

It was beneath a tropic sky
The tale was told to me;
The sailor who told in his youth had been
Over that icy sea.

He said it was fearful to see them stand,
Nor the living nor yet the dead;
And the light glared strange in the glassy eyes
Whose human look was fled.

For frost had done one half life's part,
And kept them from decay;
Those they had loved had moulder'd, but these
Look'd the dead of yesterday.

Peace to the souls of the graveless dead!
'Twas an awful doom to dree;
But fearful and wondrous are thy works,
O God, in the boundless sea!

AUGUST.

BENEATH this starry arch,
  Nought resteth or is still;
But all things hold their march,
  As if by one great will.
    Moves one, move all;
    Hark to the foot-fall!
      On, on, for ever.

Yon sheaves were once but seed;
Will ripens into deed;
As cave-drops swell the streams,
Day-thoughts feed mighty dreams;
And sorrow tracketh wrong,
As echo follows song.
      On, on, for ever.

By night, like stars on high,
  The hours reveal their train;
They whisper and go by;
  I never watch in vain.
    Moves one, move all;
    Hark to the foot-fall!
      On, on, for ever.

They pass the cradle head,
And there a promise shed;
They pass the moist new grave,
And bid rank verdure wave;
They bear through every clime
The harvest of all time.
On, on, for ever.

THE FAIRIES OF THE CALDON-LOW.

A Midsummer Legend.

"And where have you been, my Mary,
And where have you been from me?"
"I've been to the top of the Caldon-Low,
The midsummer night to see!"

"And what did you see, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon-Low?"
"I saw the blithe sunshine come down,
And I saw the merry winds blow."

"And what did you hear, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon-Hill?"
"I heard the drops of the water made,
And the green corn ears to fill."

"Oh, tell me all, my Mary—
All, all that ever you know;
For you must have seen the fairies,
Last night on the Caldon-Low."

"Then take me on your knee, mother,
And listen, mother of mine:
A hundred fairies danced last night,
And the harpers they were nine.

And merry was the glee of the harp-strings,
And their dancing feet so small;
But, oh, the sound of their talking
Was merrier far than all!"

"And what were the words, my Mary,
That you did hear them say?"
"I'll tell you all, my mother—
But let me have my way!

And some they played with the water,
And rolled it down the hill;
'And this,' they said, 'shall speedily turn
The poor old miller's mill;

For there has been no water
Ever since the first of May;
And a busy man shall the miller be
By the dawning of the day!

Oh, the miller, how he will laugh,
When he sees the mill-dam rise!
The jolly old miller, how he will laugh,
Till the tears fill both his eyes!'

And some they seized the little winds,
That sounded over the hill,
And each put a horn into his mouth,
And blew so sharp and shrill:—

'And there,' said they, 'the merry winds go,
Away from every horn;
And those shall clear the mildew dank
From the blind old widow's corn.

Oh, the poor, blind old widow—
Though she has been blind so long,
She'll be merry enough when the mildew's gone,
And the corn stands stiff and strong.'

And some they brought the brown lintseed,
And flung it down from the Low—
'And this,' said they, 'by the sunrise,
In the weaver's croft shall grow!

Oh, the poor, lame weaver,
How will he laugh outright,
When he sees his dwindling flax-field
All full of flowers by night!'

And then upspoke a brownie,
With a long beard on his chin—
'I have spun up all the tow,' said he,
'And I want some more to spin.

I've spun a piece of hempen cloth,
And I want to spin another—
A little sheet for Mary's bed,
And an apron for her mother!'

And with that I could not help but laugh,
And I laughed out loud and free;
And then on the top of the Caldon-Low
There was no one left but me.

And all, on the top of the Caldon-Low,
The mists were cold and grey,
And nothing I saw but the mossy stones
That round about me lay.

But, as I came down from the hill-top,
I heard, afar below,
How busy the jolly miller was,
And how merry the wheel did go.

And I peeped into the widow's field;
And, sure enough, was seen
The yellow ears of the mildewed corn
All standing stiff and green.

And down by the weaver's croft I stole,
To see if the flax were high;
But I saw the weaver at his gate,
With the good news in his eye!

Now, this is all I heard, mother,
And all that I did see;
So, prithee, make my bed, mother,
For I'm tired as I can be."

IFS.

Oh, if the winds could whisper what they hear,
When murmuring round at sunset through the grove;
If words were written on the streamlet clear,
So often spoken fearlessly above:
If tale-tell stars descending from on high,
Could image forth the thoughts of all that gaze,
Entranced upon that deep cerulean sky,
And count how few think *only* of their rays!

If the lulled heaving ocean could disclose
All that has passed upon her golden sand,
When the moon-lighted waves triumphant rose,
And dashed their spray upon the echoing strand.
If dews could tell how many tears have mixed
With the bright gem-like drops that Nature weeps,
If night could say how many eyes are fixed
On *her* dark shadows, while creation sleeps!

If echo, rising from her magic throne,
Repeated with her melody of voice
Each timid sigh—each whispered word and tone,
Which made the hearer's listening heart rejoice.
If nature could, unchecked, repeat aloud
All she hath heard and seen—must hear and see—
Where would the whispering, vowing, sighing crowd
Of lovers, and their blushing partners, be?

BABEL.

KNOW ye in ages past that tower
By human hands built strong and high?
Arch over arch, with magic power,
Rose proudly each successive hour,
To reach the happy sky.

It rose till human pride was crushed—
Quick came the unexpected change;
A moment every tone was hushed,
And then again they freely gushed,
But sounded wild and strange.

Quick, loud, and clear, each voice was heard,
Calling for lime, and stone, and wood,
All uttered words—but not one word,
More than the carol of a bird,
Their fellows understood.

Is there no Babel but that one,
The storied tower of other days?—
Where, round the giant pile of stone,
Pausing they stood—their labour done,
To listen in amaze.

Fair springs the tower of hope and fame,
When all our life is fairy land;
Till scarcely knowing what to blame,
Our fellows cease to feel the same—
We cease to understand.

Then when they coldly smile to hear
The burning dreams of earlier days;
The rapid fall from hope to fear,
When eyes whose every glance was dear,
Seem changing as they gaze:

Then, when we feel 'twere vain to speak
Of fervent hopes—aspirings high—
Of thoughts for which all words are weak—
Of wild far dreams, wherein we seek
Knowledge of earth and sky:

Of communings with nature's God,
When impulse deep the soul hath moved—
Of tears which sink within the sod,
Where, mingling with the valley clod,
Lies something we have loved.

Then cometh ours; and better theirs—
Of stranger tongues together brought,
Than that in which we all have shares,
A Babel in a world of cares—
Of feeling and of thought!

THE LAMENT OF THE IRISH EMIGRANT.

I'M sittin' on the stile, Mary,
Where we sat side by side,
On a bright May mornin', long ago,
When first you were my bride;
The corn was springin' fresh and green,
And the lark sang loud and high—
And the red was on your lip, Mary,
And the love-light in your eye.

The place is little changed, Mary,
The day is bright as then,
The lark's loud song is in my ear,
And the corn is green again;
But I miss the soft clasp of your hand,
And your breath, warm on my cheek;
And I still keep list'nin' for the words
You never more will speak.

'Tis but a step down yonder lane,
And the little church stands near—
The church where we were wed, Mary,
I see the spire from here.
But the graveyard lies between, Mary,
And my step might break your rest—
For I've laid you, darling, down to sleep,
With your baby on your breast.

I'm very lonely now, Mary,
For the poor make no new friends,
But, oh! they love the better still
The few our Father sends!
And you were all I had, Mary,
My blessin' and my pride!
There's nothing left to care for now,
Since my poor Mary died.

Yours was the good, brave heart, Mary,
That still kept hoping on,
When the trust in God had left my soul,
And my arm's young strength was gone;
There was comfort ever on your lip,
And the kind look on your brow—
I bless you, Mary, for that same,
Though you cannot hear me now.

I thank you for the patient smile
When your heart was fit to break,
When the hunger pain was gnawin' there,
And you hid it for my sake:
I bless you for the pleasant word
When your heart was sad and sore—
Oh, I'm thankful you are gone, Mary,
Where grief can't reach you more!

I'm biddin' you a long farewell,
My Mary—kind and true!
But I'll not forget you, darling,
In the land I'm going to;

They say there's bread and work for all,
And the sun shines always there—
But I'll not forget Old Ireland,
Were it fifty times as fair!

And often in those grand old woods
I'll sit and close my eyes,
And my heart will travel back again
To the place where Mary lies;
And I'll think I see the little stile
Where we sat side by side,
And the springin' corn, and the bright May morn,
When first you were my bride.

THE LETTER H.

'Twas in heaven pronounced, and 'twas muttered in hell,
And echo caught faintly the sound as it fell;
On the confines of earth 'twas permitted to rest,
And the depths of the ocean its presence confess'd;
'Twill be found in the sphere when 'tis riven asunder,
Be seen in the lightning and heard in the thunder.
'Twas allotted to man with his earliest breath,
Attends him at birth, and awaits him in death.
Presides o'er his happiness, honour, and health,
Is the prop of his house, and the end of his wealth.
In the heaps of the miser 'tis hoarded with care,
But is sure to be lost on his prodigal heir.
It begins every hope, every wish it must bound,
With the husbandman toils, and with monarchs is crown'd.
Without it the soldier, the seaman may roam,
But woe to the wretch who expels it from home!
In the whispers of conscience its voice will be found,
Nor e'en in the whirlwind of passion be drown'd.
'Twill not soften the heart; but though deaf be the ear,
It will make it acutely and instantly hear.
Yet in shade let it rest, like a delicate flower,
Ah! breathe on it softly—it dies in an hour.

TO A SWALLOW BUILDING UNDER OUR EAVES.

Thou too hast travelled, little fluttering thing—
Hast seen the world, and now thy weary wing
Thou too must rest.
But much, my little bird, couldst thou but tell,
I'd give to know why here thou lik'st so well
To build thy nest.

Thou hast passed fair places in thy flight;
A world lay all beneath thee where to light;
And, strange thy taste,
Of all the varied scenes that met thine eye—
Of all the spots for building 'neath the sky—
To choose this waste.

Did fortune try thee? was thy little purse
Perchance run low, and thou, afraid of worse,
Felt here secure?
Ah, no! thou need'st not gold, thou happy one!
Thou know'st it not. Of all God's creatures, man
Alone is poor.

What was it then? some mystic turn of thought,
Caught under German eaves, and hither brought,
Marring thine eye
For the world's loveliness, till thou art grown
A sober thing that does but mope and moan,
Not knowing why?

Nay, if thy mind be sound, I need not ask,
Since here I see thee working at thy task
With wing and beak.
A well-laid scheme doth that small head contain
At which thou work'st, brave bird, with might and main,
Nor more need'st seek.

In truth, I rather take it thou hast got
By instinct wise much sense about thy lot,
And hast small care
Whether an Eden or a desert be
Thy home, so thou remain'st alive, and free
To skim the air.

God speed thee, pretty bird; may thy small nest
With little ones in all good time be blest.
I love thee much;
For well thou managest that life of thine,
While I! oh, ask not what I do with mine!
Would I were such!

BODY AND SOUL.

THE roses on thy grave are now breast high:
Keen as their thorns the thought that thou must lie
Beneath, instead of in my arms—and yet—
Thy spirit, like the fragrance of a rose,
Within my heart doth evermore repose.

AT MIDNIGHT OF ALL SOULS.

I HEAR the rushing of the sea of Time;
  Whose mighty waters in their pauseless whelm,
  Suck down, resistless, nation, race, and realm,
Like rotting sea-weed, drench'd in ooze and slime.
Ocean! incarnardin'd with countless crime,
Green with drown'd hopes, and wreck of joyous prime;
  Salt with the myriad tears of human woes;
  Toss'd with the surge and tumult of earth's throes;
We note thy shifting sands, and pace thy shore;
We watch thy ebbing tides, and list thy roar,
  Heark'ning with awe, th' innumerable things
  Told in thy billowy thunderings;
Until by the coming of our one appointed wave,
We're swept into th' eddy of that universal grave.

THE CRY OF THE HUMAN.

I.

"THERE is no God," the foolish saith, —
But none, "There is no sorrow,"
And nature oft, the cry of faith,
In bitter need will borrow:
Eyes, which the preacher could not school,
By wayside graves are raisëd;
And lips say, "God be pitiful,"
Who ne'er said, "God be praisëd."
Be pitiful, O God!

II.

The tempest stretches from the steep
The shadow of its coming—
The beasts grow tame, and near us creep,
As help were in the human—
Yet, while the cloud-wheels roll and grind,
We spirits tremble under!—
The hills have echoes; but we find
No answer for the thunder.
Be pitiful, O God!

III.

The battle hurtles on the plains—
Earth feels new scythes upon her:
We reap our brothers for the wains,
And call the harvest . . . honour,—

Draw face to face, front line to line,
One image all inherit,—
Then kill, curse on, by that same sign,
Clay, clay,—and spirit, spirit.
Be pitiful, O God!

IV.

The plague runs festering through the town,—
And never a bell is tolling;
And corpses, jostled 'neath the moon,
Nod to the dead-cart's rolling!
The young child calleth for the cup—
The strong man brings it weeping;
The mother from her babe looks up,
And shrieks away its sleeping.
Be pitiful, O God!

V.

The plague of gold strikes far and near,—
And deep and strong it enters:
This purple chimar which we wear,
Makes madder than the centaur's.
Our thoughts grow blank, our words grow strange;
We cheer the pale gold-diggers—
Each soul is worth so much on 'Change,
And marked, like sheep, with figures.
Be pitiful, O God!

VI.

The curse of gold upon the land,
The lack of bread enforces—
The rail-cars snort from strand to strand,
Like more of Death's white horses!
The rich preach "rights" and "future days,"
And hear no angel scoffing!
The poor die mute—with starving gaze
On corn-ships in the offing.
Be pitiful, O God!

VII.

We meet together at the feast—
To private mirth betake us—
We stare down in the wine-cup, lest
Some vacant chair should shake us!
We name delight, and pledge it round—
"It shall be ours to-morrow!"
God's seraphs! do your voices sound
As sad, in naming sorrow?
Be pitiful, O God!

VIII.

We sit together, with the skies,
The steadfast skies, above us:
We look into each other's eyes,—
"And how long will you love us?"—
The eyes grow dim with prophecy,
The voices, low and breathless—
"Till death us part!"—O words, to be
Our *best* for love the deathless!
Be pitiful, dear God!

IX.

We tremble by the harmless bed
  Of one loved and departed—
Our tears drop on the lids that said
  Last night, "Be stronger-hearted!"
O God,—to clasp those fingers close,
  And yet to feel so lonely!—
To see such light upon the brows,
  Which is the daylight only!
    Be pitiful, O God!

X.

The happy children come to us,
  And look up in our faces:
They ask us—Was it thus, and thus,
  When we were in their places?—
We cannot speak;—we see anew
  The hills we used to live in;
And feel our mother's smile press through
  The kisses she is giving.
    Be pitiful, O God!

XI.

We pray together at the kirk,
  For mercy, mercy solely—
Hands weary with the evil work,
  We lift them to the Holy!
The corpse is calm below our knee—
  Its spirit, bright before Thee—
Between them, worse than either, we—
  Without the rest or glory.
    Be pitiful, O God!

XII.

We leave the communing of men,
The murmur of the passions;
And live alone, to live again
With endless generations.
Are we so brave?—The sea and sky
In silence lift their mirrors,
And, glassed therein, our spirits high
Recoil from their own terrors.
Be pitiful, O God!

XIII.

We sit on hills our childhood wist,
Woods, hamlets, streams, beholding!
The sun strikes, through the farthest mist,
The city's spire to golden.
The city's golden spire it was,
When home and health were strongest,
But now it is the churchyard grass,
We look upon the longest.
Be pitiful, O God!

XIV.

And soon all vision waxeth dull—
Men whisper, "He is dying:"
We cry no more, "Be pitiful!"—
We have no strength for crying!—
No strength, no need! Then, Soul of mine,
Look up and triumph rather—
Lo! in the depth of God's Divine,
The Son adjures the Father—
BE PITIFUL, O GOD!

THE DEAD PAN.

[Excited by Schiller's "Götter Griechenlands," and partly founded on a well-known tradition mentioned in a treatise of Plutarch ("De Oraculorum Defectu"), according to which, at the hour of the Saviour's agony, a cry of "Great Pan is dead!" swept across the waves in the hearing of certain mariners,—and the oracles ceased.

It is in all veneration to the memory of the deathless Schiller, that I oppose a doctrine still more dishonouring to poetry than to Christianity.

As Mr. Kenyon's graceful and harmonious paraphrase of the German poem was the first occasion of the turning of my thoughts in this direction, I take advantage of the pretence to indulge my feelings (which overflow on other grounds) by inscribing my lyric to that dear friend and relative, with the earnestness of appreciating esteem as well as of affectionate gratitude. E. B. B.]

I.

Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas,
Can ye listen in your silence?
Can your mystic voices tell us
Where ye hide? In floating islands,
With a wind that evermore
Keeps you out of sight of shore?
Pan, Pan is dead.

II.

In what revels are ye sunken
In old Æthiopia?
Have the Pygmies made you drunken,
Bathing in mandragora
Your divine pale lips, that shiver
Like the lotus in the river?
Pan, Pan is dead.

III.

Do ye sit there still in slumber,
In gigantic Alpine rows?
The black poppies out of number
Nodding, dripping from your brows
To the red lees of your wine,—
And so kept alive and fine?
Pan, Pan is dead

IV.

Or lie crushed your stagnant corses
Where the silver spheres roll on,
Stung to life by centric forces
Thrown like rays out from the sun!—
While the smoke of your old altars
Is the shroud that round you welters?
Great Pan is dead.

V.

Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas.
Said the old Hellenic tongue!
Said the hero-oaths, as well as
Poets' songs the sweetest sung!
Have ye grown deaf in a day?
Can ye speak not yea or nay,—
Since Pan is dead?

VI.

Do ye leave your rivers flowing
All alone, O Naiades,
While your drenched locks dry slow in
This cold feeble sun and breeze?—
Not a word the Naiads say,
Though the rivers run for aye;
For Pan is dead.

VII.

From the gloaming of the oak wood,
O ye Dryads, could ye flee?
At the rushing thunderstroke, would
No sob tremble through the tree?—
Not a word the Dryads say,
Though the forests wave for aye.
For Pan is dead.

VIII.

Have ye left the mountain places,
Oreads wild, for other tryst?
Shall we see no sudden faces
Strike a glory through the mist?
Not a sound the silence thrills,
Of the everlasting hills.
Pan, Pan is dead.

IX.

O twelve gods of Plato's vision,
Crowned to starry wanderings,—
With your chariots in procession,
And your silver clash of wings!
Very pale ye seem to rise,
Ghosts of Grecian deities—
Now Pan is dead!

X.

Jove! that right hand is unloaded,
Whence the thunder did prevail:
While in idiocy of godhead,
Thou art staring the stars pale!
And thine eagle, blind and old,
Roughs his feathers in the cold.
Pan, Pan is dead.

XI.

Where, O Juno, is the glory
Of thy regal look and tread?
Will they lay, for evermore, thee,
On thy dim, straight, golden bed?
Will thy queendom all lie hid
Meekly under either lid?
Pan, Pan is dead.

XII.

Ha, Apollo! floats his golden
Hair all mist-like where he stands;
While the Muses hang enfolding
Knee and foot with faint wild hands?
'Neath the clanging of thy bow,
Niobe looked lost as thou!
Pan, Pan is dead.

XIII.

Shall the casque with its brown iron,
Pallas' broad blue eyes, eclipse,—
And no hero take inspiring
From the God-Greek of her lips?
'Neath her olive dost thou sit,
Mars the mighty, cursing it?
Pan, Pan is dead.

XIV.

Bacchus, Bacchus! on the panther
He swoons,—bound with his own vines!
And his Mænads slowly saunter,
Head aside, among the pines,
While they murmur dreamingly,—
"Evohe—ah—evohe—"
Ah, Pan is dead!

XV.

Neptune lies beside the trident,
Dull and senseless as a stone:
And old Pluto deaf and silent
Is cast out into the sun.
Ceres smileth stern thereat,—
"We *all* now are desolate"—
Now Pan is dead.

XVI.

Aphrodite! dead and driven
As thy native foam, thou art;
With the cestus long done heaving
On the white calm of thine heart!
Ai Adonis! at that shriek,
Not a tear runs down her cheek—
Pan, Pan is dead.

XVII.

And the Loves, we used to know from
One another,—huddled lie,
Frore as taken in a snow-storm,
Close beside her tenderly,—
As if each had weakly tried
Once to kiss her as he died.
Pan, Pan is dead.

XVIII.

What, and Hermes! Time enthralleth
All thy cunning, Hermes, thus,—
And the ivy blindly crawleth
Round thy brave caduceus?
Hast thou no new message for us,
Full of thunder and Jove-glories?
Nay! Pan is dead.

XIX.

Crowned Cybele's great turret
Rocks and crumbles on her head:
Roar the lions of her chariot
Toward the wilderness, unfed:
Scornful children are not mute,—
"Mother, mother, walk afoot—
Since Pan is dead!"

XX.

In the fiery-hearted centre
Of the solemn universe,
Ancient Vesta,—who could enter
To consume thee with this curse?
Drop thy grey chin on thy knee,
O thou palsied Mystery!
For Pan is dead.

XXI.

Gods! we vainly do adjure you,—
Ye return nor voice nor sign:
Not a votary could secure you
Even a grave for your Divine!
Not a grave, to show thereby,
Here these grey old gods do lie!
Pan, Pan is dead.

XXII.

Even that Greece who took your wages,
Calls the obolus outworn:
And the hoarse, deep-throated ages
Laugh your godships unto scorn—
And the poets do disclaim you,
Or grow colder if they name you—
And Pan is dead.

XXIII.

Gods bereaved, gods belated,—
With your purples rent asunder!
Gods discrowned and desecrated,
Disinherited of thunder!
Now, the goats may climb and crop
The soft grass on Ida's top—
Now, Pan is dead.

XXIV.

Calm, of old, the bark went onward,
When a cry more loud than wind,
Rose up, deepened, and swept sunward,
From the pilèd Dark behind:
And the sun shrank and grew pale,
Breathed against by the great wail—
Pan, Pan is dead.

XXV.

And the rowers from the benches
Fell,—each shuddering on his face—
While departing Influences
Struck a cold back through the place:
And the shadow of the ship
Reeled along the passive deep—
Pan, Pan is dead.

XXVI.

And that dismal cry rose slowly,
And sank slowly through the air;
Full of spirit's melancholy
And eternity's despair!
And they heard the words it said—
PAN IS DEAD—GREAT PAN IS DEAD—
PAN, PAN IS DEAD.

XXVII.

'Twas the hour when One in Sion
Hung for love's sake on a cross—
When His brow was chill with dying,
And His soul was faint with loss;
When His priestly blood dropped downward,
And His kingly eyes looked throneward—
Then, Pan was dead.

XXVIII.

By the love He stood alone in,
His sole Godhead stood complete:
And the false gods fell down moaning,
Each from off his golden seat—
All the false gods with a cry
Rendered up their deity—
Pan, Pan was dead.

XXIX.

Wailing wide across the islands,
They rent, vest-like, their Divine!
And a darkness and a silence
Quenched the light of every shrine:
And Dodona's oak swang lonely
Henceforth, to the tempest only,
Pan, Pan was dead.

XXX.

Pythia staggered,—feeling o'er her,
Her lost god's forsaking look,
Straight her eyeballs filmed with horror,
And her crispy fillets shook—
And her lips gasped through their foam,
For a word that did not come.
Pan, Pan was dead.

XXXI.

O ye vain false gods of Hellas,
Ye are silent evermore!
And I dash down this old chalice
Whence libations ran of yore.
See! the wine crawls in the dust
Wormlike—as your glories must!
Since Pan is dead.

XXXII.

Get to dust, as common mortals,
By a common doom and track!
Let no Schiller from the portals
Of that Hades, call you back
Or instruct us to weep all
At your antique funeral.
Pan, Pan is dead.

XXXIII.

By your beauty, which confesses
Some chief Beauty conquering you,—
By our grand heroic guesses,
Through your falsehood, at the True,—
We will weep *not* . . . / earth shall roll
Heir to each god's aureole—
And Pan is dead.

XXXIV.

Earth outgrows the mythic fancies
Sung beside her in her youth :
And those debonaire romances
Sound but dull beside the truth.
Phœbus' chariot-course is run !
Look up, poets, to the sun !
Pan, Pan is dead.

XXXV.

Christ hath sent us down the angels ;
And the whole earth and the skies
Are illumed by altar-candles
Lit for blessed mysteries.
And a Priest's Hand, through creation,
Waveth calm and consecration—
And Pan is dead.

XXXVI.

Truth is fair: should we forego it?
Can we sigh right for a wrong?
God Himself is the best Poet,
And the Real is His song.
Sing His truth out fair and full,
And secure His beautiful.
Let Pan be dead.

XXXVII.

Truth is large. Our aspiration
Scarce embraces half we be.
Shame! to stand in His creation
And doubt Truth's sufficiency!—
To think God's song unexcelling
The poor tales of our own telling—
When Pan is dead!

XXXVIII.

What is true and just and honest,
What is lovely, what is pure—
All of praise that hath admonisht,—
All of virtue, shall endure—
These are themes for poets' uses,
Stirring nobler than the Muses—
Ere Pan was dead.

XXXIX.

O brave poets, keep back nothing;
Nor mix falsehood with the whole!
Look up Godward! speak the truth in
Worthy song from earnest soul!
Hold, in high poetic duty,
Truest Truth the fairest Beauty:
Pan, Pan is dead.

RHYME OF THE DUCHESS MAY.

In the belfry, one by one, went the ringers from the sun,—
Toll slowly!
And the oldest ringer said, "Ours is music for the Dead,
When the rebecks are all done."

Six abeles i' the kirkyard grow, on the northside in a row,—
Toll slowly!
And the shadows of their tops, rock across the little slopes
Of the grassy graves below.

On the south side and the west, a small river runs in haste,—
Toll slowly!
And between the river flowing and the fair green trees agrowing,
Do the dead lie at their rest.

On the east I sate that day, up against a willow grey:—
Toll slowly!
Through the rain of willow-branches, I could see the low hill-ranges,
And the river on its way.

There I sate beneath the tree, and the bell tolled solemnly,—
Toll slowly!

While the trees' and rivers' voices flowed between the solemn noises,—
Yet death seemed more loud to me.

There, I read this ancient rhyme, while the bell did all the time
Toll slowly!
And the solemn knell fell in with the tale of life and sin,
Like a rhythmic fate sublime.

THE RHYME.

Broad the forests stood (I read) on the hills of Linteged—
Toll slowly!
And three hundred years had stood, mute adown each hoary wood,
Like a full heart having prayed.

And the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—
Toll slowly!
And but little thought was theirs, of the silent antique years,
In the building of their nest.

Down the sun dropt, large and red, on the towers of Linteged,—
Toll slowly!
Lance and spear-head on the height, bustling strange on fiery light,
While the castle stood in shade.

There, the castle stood up black, with the red sun at its back,
Toll slowly!
Like a sullen mouldering pyre, with a top that flickers fire,
When the wind is on its track.

And five hundred archers tall did besiege the castle wall,—
Toll slowly!
And the castle, seethed in blood, fourteen days and nights had stood,
And to-night anears its fall.

Yet thereunto, blind to doom, three months since, a bride did come,—
Toll slowly!
One who proudly trod the floors, and softly whispered in the doors,
"May good angels bless our home.'

Oh, a bride of queenly eyes, with a front of constancies,—
Toll slowly!
Oh, a bride of cordial mouth,—where the untired smile of youth
Did light outward its own sighs.

'Twas a Duke's fair orphan-girl, and her uncle's ward, the Earl
Toll slowly!
Who betrothed her twelve years old, for the sake of dowry gold,
To his son Lord Leigh, the churl.

But what time she had made good all her years of womanhood,—

Toll slowly!

Unto both these lords of Leigh spake she out right sovranly,

"My will runneth as my blood.

"And while this same blood makes red this same right hand's veins," she said,—

Toll slowly!

"'Tis my will, as lady free, not to wed a Lord of Leigh,
But Sir Guy of Linteged."

The old Earl he smiled smooth, then he sighed for wilful youth,—

Toll slowly!

"Good my niece, that hand withal, looketh somewhat soft and small,
For so large a will, in sooth."

She, too, smiled by that same sign,—but her smile was cold and fine,—

Toll slowly!

"Little hand clasps muckle gold; or it were not worth the hold
Of thy son, good uncle mine!"

Then the young lord jerked his breath, and swore thickly in his teeth,—

Toll slowly!

"He would wed his own betrothed, an she loved him an she loathed,
Let the life come or the death."

Up she rose with scornful eyes, as her father's child might rise,—

Toll slowly!

"Thy hound's blood, my lord of Leigh, stains thy knightly heel," quoth she,

"Though he moans not where he lies."

"But a woman's will dies hard, in the hall or on the sward!"

Toll slowly!

"By that grave, my lords, which made, me orphaned girl and dowered lady,

I deny you wife and ward."

Unto each she bowed her head and swept past with lofty tread,—

Toll slowly!

Ere the midnight bell had ceased, in the chapel had the priest

Blessed her, bride of Linteged.

Fast and fain the bridal train, along the night-storm rode amain:—

Toll slowly!

Wild the steeds of lord and serf, struck their hoofs out on the turf,

In the pauses of the rain.

Fast and fain, the kinsmen's train, along the storm pursued amain—

Toll slowly!

Steed on steed-track, dashing off, thickening, doubling—hoof on hoof,

In the pauses of the rain.

And the bridegroom led the flight, on his red-roan steed of might,—
Toll slowly!
And the bride lay on his arm, still, as if she feared no harm,
Smiling out into the night.

"Dost thou fear?" he said at last:—"Nay!" she answered him in haste,—
Toll slowly!
"Not such death as we could find—only life with one behind—
Ride on fast as fear, ride fast!"

Up the mountain wheeled the steed—girth to ground, and fetlocks spread,—
Toll slowly!
Headlong bounds, and rocking flanks,—down he staggered, —down the banks,
To the towers of Linteged.

High and low the serfs looked out, red the flambeaus tossed about,—
Toll slowly!
In the courtyard rose the cry—"Live the Duchess and Sir Guy,"
But she never heard them shout.

On the steed she dropt her cheek, kissed his mane and kissed his neck,—
Toll slowly!
"I had happier died by thee, than lived on a Lady Leigh,"
Were the first words which she did speak.

But a three months' joyaunce lay 'twixt that moment and to-day,—
Toll slowly!
When five hundred archers tall, stand beside the castle wall,
To recapture Duchess May.

And the castle standeth black, with the red sun at its back,—
Toll slowly!
And a fortnight's siege is done—and, except the Duchess, none
Can misdoubt the coming wrack.

Then the captain, young Lord Leigh, with his eyes so grey of blee,—
Toll slowly!
And thin lips, that scarcely sheathe the cold white gnashing of his teeth,
Gnashed in smiling, absently,—

Cried aloud—"So goes the day, bridegroom fair of Duchess May!"
Toll slowly!
"Look thy last upon that sun. If thou seest to-morrow's one
'Twill be through a foot of clay.

"Ha, fair bride! dost hear no sound, save that moaning of the hound?"—
Toll slowly!
"Thou and I have parted troth,—yet I keep my vengeance-oath,
And the other may come round.

"Ha! thy will is brave to dare, and thy new love past compare,"—
Toll slowly!
"Yet thine old love's falchion brave, is as strong a thing to have,
As the will of lady fair.

"Peck on blindly, netted dove!—If a wife's name thee behove,"—
Toll slowly!
"Thou shalt wear the same to-morrow, ere the grave has hid the sorrow
Of thy last ill-mated love."

"O'er his fixed and silent mouth, thou and I will call back troth,"—
Toll slowly!
"He shall altar be and priest,—and he will not cry at least,
"I forbid you—I am loth!"

"I will wring thy fingers pale, in the gauntlet of my mail,"—
Toll slowly!
"'Little hand and muckle gold' close shall lie within my hold,
As the sword did, to prevail."

O the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—
Toll slowly!
O and laughed the Duchess May, and her soul did put away
All his boasting, for a jest.

In her chamber did she sit, laughing low to think of it.—
Toll slowly!
"Tower is strong and will is free—thou canst boast, my lord of Leigh,
But thou boastest little wit."

In her tire-glass gazed she, and she blushed right womanly,—
Toll slowly!
She blushed half from her disdain—half, her beauty was so plain,
—"Oath for oath, my Lord of Leigh!"

Straight she called her maidens in—"Since ye gave me blame herein,"—
Toll slowly!
"That a bridal such as mine, should lack gauds to make it fine,
Come and shrive me from that sin.

"It is three months gone to-day, since I gave mine hand away!"
Toll slowly!
"Bring the gold and bring the gem, we will keep bride-state in them,
While we keep the foe at bay.

"On your arms I loose mine hair;—comb it smooth and crown it fair,"—
Toll slowly!
"I would look in purple-pall, from this lattice down the wall,
And throw scorn to one that's there!"

O the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—
Toll slowly!
On the tower the castle's lord leant in silence on his sword,
With an anguish in his breast.

With a spirit-laden weight, did he lean down passionate,—
Toll slowly!
They have almost sapped the wall, they will enter therewithal,
With no knocking at the gate.

Then the sword he leant upon, shivered, snapped upon the stone,—
Toll slowly!
"Sword," he thought, with inward laugh, "ill thou servest for a staff,
When thy nobler use is done!

"Sword, thy nobler use is done!—tower is lost, and shame begun:"—
Toll slowly!
"If we met them in the breach, hilt to hilt or speech to speech,
We should die there, each for one.

"If we met them at the wall, we should singly, vainly fall,"—
Toll slowly!
"But if *I* die here alone,—then I die, who am but one,
And die nobly for them all.

"Five true friends lie for my sake—in the moat and in the brake,"

Toll slowly!

"Thirteen warriors lie at rest, with a black wound in the breast,
And none of these will wake.

"And no more of this shall be!—heart-blood weighs too heavily,"—

Toll slowly!

"And I could not sleep in grave, with the faithful and the brave
Heaped around and over me.

"Since young Clare a mother hath, and young Ralph a plighted faith,"—

Toll slowly!

"Since my pale young sister's cheeks blush like rose when Ronald speaks,
Though never a word she saith—

"These shall never die for me—life-blood falls too heavily:"—

Toll slowly!

"And if *I* die here apart,—o'er my dead and silent heart
They shall pass out safe and free.

"When the foe hath heard it said—'Death holds Guy of Linteged,'"—

Toll slowly!

"That new corse new peace shall bring: and a blessed, blessed thing,
Shall the stone be at its head.

"Then my friends shall pass out free, and shall bear my memory,"—

Toll slowly!

"Then my foes shall sleek their pride, soothing fair my widowed bride,
Whose sole sin was love of me.

"With their words all smooth and sweet, they will front her and entreat:"—

Toll slowly!

"And their purple pall will spread underneath her fainting head,
While her tears drop over it.

"She will weep her woman's tears, she will pray her woman's prayers,"—

Toll slowly!

"But her heart is young in pain, and her hopes will spring again
By the suntime of her years.

"Ah, sweet May—ah, sweetest grief!—once I vowed thee my belief,"—

Toll slowly!

"That thy name expressed thy sweetness,—May of poets, in completeness!
Now my May-day seemeth brief."

All these silent thoughts did swim o'er his eyes grown strange and dim,—

Toll slowly!

Till his true men in the place, wished they stood there face to face
With the foe instead of him.

"One last oath, my friends, that wear faithful hearts to do and dare!"—
Toll slowly!
"Tower must fall, and bride be lost!—swear me service worth the cost!"
—Bold they stood around to swear.

"Each man clasp my hand, and swear, by the deed we failed in there,"—
Toll slowly!
"Not for vengeance, not for right, will ye strike one blow to-night!"
Pale they stood around—to swear.

"One last boon, young Ralph and Clare! faithful hearts to do and dare!"—
Toll slowly!
"Bring that steed up from his stall, which she kissed before you all,—
Guide him up the turret-stair.

"Ye shall harness him aright, and lead upward to this height!"—
Toll slowly!
"Once in love and twice in war, hath he borne me strong and far,—
He shall bear me far to-night."

Then his men looked to and fro', when they heard him speaking so,—

Toll slowly!

—"'Las! the noble heart," they thought,—"he in sooth is grief distraught —

Would, we stood here with the foe!"

But a fire flashed from his eye, 'twixt their thought and their reply,—

Toll slowly!

"Have ye so much time to waste? We who ride here, must ride fast,

As we wish our foes to fly."

They have fetched the steed with care, in the harness he did wear,—

Toll slowly!

Past the court and through the doors, across the rushes of the floors;

But they goad him up the stair.

Then from out her bower-chambère, did the Duchess May repair,—

Toll slowly!

"Tell me now what is your need," said the lady, "of this steed,

That ye goad him up the stair?"

Calm she stood! unbodkined through, fell her dark hair to her shoe,—

Toll slowly!

And the smile upon her face, ere she left the tiring-glass,

Had not time enough to go.

"Get thee back, sweet Duchess May; hope is gone like yesterday,"—

Toll slowly!

"One half-hour completes the breach; and thy lord grows wild of speech.—

Get thee in, sweet lady, and pray!

"In the east tower, high'st of all, loud he cries for steed from stall,"—

Toll slowly!

"'He would ride as far,' quoth he, 'as for love and victory,

Though he rides the castle-wall.'

"And we fetch the steed from stall, up where never a hoof did fall"—

Toll slowly!

"Wifely prayer meets deathly need! may the sweet Heavens hear thee plead,

If he rides the castle-wall!"

Low she dropt her head, and lower, till her hair coiled on the floor,—

Toll slowly!

And tear after tear you heard, fall distinct as any word

Which you might be listening for.

"Get thee in, thou soft ladiè! here is never a place for thee!"—

Toll slowly!

"Braid thine hair and clasp thy gown, that thy beauty in its moan

May find grace with Leigh of Leigh."

She stood up in bitter case, with a pale yet steady face,—
Toll slowly!
Like a statue thunderstruck, which, though quivering, seems to look
Right against the thunder-place.

And her foot trod in with pride, her own tears i' the stone beside,—
Toll slowly!
"Go to, faithful friends, go to! judge no more what ladies do,—
No, nor how their lords may ride!"

Then the good steed's rein she took, and his neck did kiss and stroke:
Toll slowly!
Soft he neighed to answer her; and then followed up the stair
For the love of her sweet look.

Oh, and steeply, steeply wound up the narrow stair around,—
Toll slowly!
Oh, and closely, closely speeding, step by step beside her treading,
Did he follow, meek as hound.

On the east tower high'st of all,—there, where never a hoof did fall,—
Toll slowly!
Out they swept, a vision steady,—noble steed and lovely lady,
Calm as if in bower or stall!

Down she knelt at her lord's knee, and she looked up silently,—

Toll slowly!

And he kissed her twice and thrice, for that look within her eyes,

Which he could not bear to see.

Quoth he, "Get thee from this strife,—and the sweet saints bless thy life!"—

Toll slowly!

"In this hour, I stand in need of my noble red-roan steed,

But not of my noble wife."

Quoth she, "Meekly have I done all thy biddings under sun:"—

Toll slowly!

"But by all my womanhood,—which is proved so, true and good,

I will never do this one.

"Now by womanhood's degree, and by wifehood's verity,"—

Toll slowly!

"In this hour if thou hast need of thy noble red-roan steed,

Thou hast also need of *me*.

"By this golden ring ye see on this lifted hand pardiè,"—

Toll slowly!

"If, this hour, on castle-wall, can be room for steed from stall,

Shall be also room for *me*."

"So the sweet saints with me be" (did she utter solemnly),—
Toll slowly!
"If a man, this eventide, on this castle-wall will ride,
He shall ride the same with *me*."

Oh, he sprang up in the selle, and he laughed out bitter-well,—
Toll slowly!
"Would'st thou ride among the leaves, as we used on other eves,
To hear chime a vesper-bell?"

She clang closer to his knee—"Ay, beneath thy cypress-tree!"—
Toll slowly!
"Mock me not; for otherwhere than along the greenwood fair,
Have I ridden fast with thee!

"Fast I rode, with new-made vows from my angry kinsman's house!"
Toll slowly!
"What! and would you men should reck, that I dared more for love's sake,
As a bride than as a spouse?

"What, and would you it should fall, as a proverb, before all,"—
Toll slowly!

"That a bride may keep your side, while through the castle-gate you ride,
Yet eschew the castle-wall?"

Ho! the breach yawns into ruin, and roars up against her suing,—
Toll slowly!
With the inarticulate din, and the dreadful falling in—
Shrieks of doing and undoing!

Twice he wrung her hands in twain; but the small hands closed again,—
Toll slowly!
Back he reined the steed—back, back! but she trailed along his track,
With a frantic clasp and strain!

Evermore the foemen pour through the crash of window and door,—
Toll slowly!
And the shouts of Leigh and Leigh, and the shrieks of "kill!" and "flee!"
Strike up clear the general roar.

Thrice he wrung her hands in twain,—but they closed and clung again,—
Toll slowly!
Wild she clung, as one, withstood, clasps a Christ upon the rood,
In a spasm of deathly pain.

She clung wild and she clung mute,—with her shuddering lips half-shut,—

Toll slowly!

Her head fallen as in swound,—hair and knee swept on the ground,—

She clung wild to stirrup and foot.

Back he reined his steed, back-thrown on the slippery coping-stone,—

Toll slowly!

Back the iron hoofs did grind, on the battlement behind,

Whence a hundred feet went down.

And his heel did press and goad on the quivering flank bestrode,

Toll slowly!

"Friends and brothers! safe my wife!—Pardon, sweet, in change for life,—

But I ride alone to God!"

Straight as if the Holy name had upbreathed her like a flame,—

Toll slowly!

She upsprang, she rose upright! in his selle she sate in sight;

By her love she overcame.

And her head was on his breast, where she smiled as one at rest,—

Toll slowly!

"Ring," she cried, "O vesper-bell in the beechwood's old chapelle!

But the passing-bell rings best."

They have caught out at the rein which Sir Guy threw
loose—in vain,—
Toll slowly!
For the horse in stark despair, with his front hoofs poised
in air,
On the last verge, rears amain.

Now he hangs, he rocks between, and his nostrils curdle in,
Toll slowly!
Now he shivers head and hoof—and the flakes of foam fall
off;
And his face grows fierce and thin!

And a look of human woe, from his staring eyes did go,—
Toll slowly!
And a sharp cry uttered he, in a foretold agony
Of the headlong death below,—

And, "Ring, ring, thou passing-bell," still she cried, "i' the
old chapelle!"—
Toll slowly!
Then back-toppling, crashing back—a dead-weight flung out
to wrack,
Horse and riders overfell!

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—
Toll slowly!
And I read this ancient Rhyme, in the kirkyard, while the
chime
Slowly tolled for one at rest.

The abeles moved in the sun, and the river smooth did run,—
Toll slowly!
And the ancient Rhyme rang strange, with its passion and its change,
Here, where all done lay undone.

And beneath a willow tree, I a little grave did see,—
Toll slowly!
Where was graved,—"HERE UNDEFILED, LIETH MAUD, A THREE-YEAR CHILD,
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED FORTY-THREE."

Then, O Spirits—did I say—ye who rode so fast that day,—
Toll slowly!
Did star-wheels and angel wings, with their holy winnowings,
Keep beside you all the way?

Though in passion ye would dash, with a blind and heavy crash,
Toll slowly!
Up against the thick-bossed shield of God's judgment in the field,—
Though your heart and brain were rash,—

Now, your will is all unwilled—now, your pulses are all stilled,—
Toll slowly!
Now, ye lie as meek and mild (whereso laid) as Maud the child,
Whose small grave to-day was filled.

Beating heart and burning brow, ye are very patient now,—
Toll slowly!
And the children might be bold to pluck the kingcups from your mould,
Ere a month had let them grow.

And you let the goldfinch sing, in the alder near, in spring,—
Toll slowly!
Let her build her nest and sit all the three weeks out on it,
Murmuring not at anything.

In your patience ye are strong; cold and heat ye take not wrong:—
Toll slowly!
When the trumpet of the angel blows eternity's evangel,
Time will seem to you not long.

O the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—
Toll slowly!
And I said in underbreath,—all our life is mixed with death,—
And who knoweth which is best?

O the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,
Toll slowly!
And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our incompleteness,—
Round our restlessness, His rest.

GRIEF.

I TELL you, hopeless grief is passionless—
That only men incredulous of despair,
Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air
Beat upward to God's throne in loud access
Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness
In souls, as countries, lieth silent-bare
Under the blenching, vertical eye-glare
Of the absolute Heavens. Deep-hearted man, express
Grief for thy Dead in silence like to death;
Most like a monumental statue set
In everlasting watch and moveless woe,
Till itself crumble to the dust beneath!
Touch it! the marble eyelids are not wet—
If it could weep, it could arise and go.

THE POET AND THE BIRD.

A FABLE.

SAID a people to a poet—"Go out from among us straightway!
While we are thinking earthly things, thou singest of divine.
There's a little fair brown nightingale, who, sitting in the gateway,
Makes fitter music to our ear, than any song of thine!"

The poet went out weeping—the nightingale ceased chanting;
"Now, wherefore, O thou nightingale, is all thy sweetness done?"
"I cannot sing my earthly things, the heavenly poet wanting,
Whose highest harmony includes the lowest under sun."

The poet went out weeping—and died abroad, bereft there—
The bird flew to his grave and died amid a thousand wails!—
Yet, when I last came by the place, I swear the music left there
Was only of the poet's song, and not the nightingale's.

PERPLEXED MUSIC.

Experience, like a pale musician, holds
A dulcimer of patience in his hand;
Whence harmonies we cannot understand,
Of God's will in His worlds, the strain unfolds
In sad perplexed mirrors. Deathly colds
Fall on us while we hear and countermand
Our sanguine heart back from the fancy-land,
With nightingales in visionary wolds.
We murmur,—"Where is any certain tune
Or measured music, in such notes as these?"—
But angels, leaning from the golden seat,
Are not as minded! their fine ear hath won
The issue of completed cadences;
And, smiling down the stars, they whisper—Sweet.

THE SOUL'S EXPRESSION.

With stammering lips and insufficient sound,
I strive and struggle to deliver right
That music of my nature, day and night
With dream and thought and feeling, interwound:
And inly answering all the senses round
With octaves of a mystic depth and height,
Which step out grandly to the infinite
From the dark edges of the sensual ground!
This song of soul I struggle to outbear
Through portals of the sense, sublime and whole,
And utter all myself into the air:
But if I did it,—as the thunder-roll
Breaks its own cloud,—my flesh would perish there,
Before that dread apocalypse of soul.

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE.

XXII.

When our two souls stand up erect and strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curvëd point,—what bitter wrong
Can earth do to us, that we should not long
Be here contented? Think. In mounting higher
The angels would press on us and aspire
To drop some golden orb of perfect song
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay
Rather on Earth, Belovëd,—where the unfit
Contrarious moods of men recoil away
And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day,
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE.

XLIII.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

YOUNG JAMIE.

AIR—"*Drummond Castle.*"

LEAFLESS and bare were the shrubs and the flower,
Cauld was the drift that blew over yon mountain,
But caulder my heart at his last ling'ring hour,
Though warm was the tear-drap that fell frae my e'e.
O saft is the tint of the gowan sae bonny,
The blue heather-bell and the rose sweet as ony,
But softer the blink o' his bonnie blue ee,
And sweeter the smile o' young Jamie.

Dark lowers the cloud o'er yon mountain sae hie,
Faint gleams the sun through the mists o' the ocean,
Rough rows the wave on whose bosom I see
The wee bit frail bark that bears Jamie frae me.
O, lang may I look o'er yon wild waste sae dreary,
And lang count the hours, now so lonesome and weary,
And oft may I see the leaf fade frae the tree,
Ere I see the blythe blink o' his bonnie blue ee.

Cheerless and wae, on yon snaw-cover'd thorn,
Mournfu' and lane is the chirp o' the Robin,
He looks through the storm, but nae shelter can see;
Come, Robin, and join the sad concert with me.
Oh, lang may I look o'er yon foam-crested billow,
And hope dies away like a storm-broken willow;
Sweet Robin, the blossom again ye may see,
But I'll ne'er see the blink o' his bonnie blue ee.

WINTER.

I saw him on his throne, far in the North,
Him ye call Winter, picturing him ever
An aged man, whose frame with palsied shiver
Bends o'er the fiery element, his foe.
But him I saw was a young god whose brow
Was crown'd with jagged icicles, and forth
From his keen spirit—like eyes there shone a light
Broad, glaring, and intensely cold and bright.
His breath, like sharp-edged arrows, pierced the air;
The naked earth crouched shuddering at his feet;
His finger on all murmuring waters sweet
Lay icily,—motion nor sound was there;
Nature seem'd frozen—dead; and still and slow
A winding sheet fell o'er her feature's fair,
Flaky and white from his white wings of snow.

SONNET.

I HEAR a low voice in the sunset woods;
Listen, it says: "Decay, decay, decay."
I hear it in the murmuring of the floods,
And the wind sighs it as it flies away.
Autumn is come; seest thou not in the skies
The stormy light of his fierce, lurid eyes?
Autumn is come; his brazen feet have trod,
Withering and scorching, o'er the mossy sod.
The fainting year sees her fresh flowery wreath
Shrivel in his hot grasp; his burning breath,
Dries the sweet water-springs that in the shade
Wandering along, delicious music made.
A flood of glory hangs upon the world,
Summer's bright wings shining ere they are furled.

SONNET.

ART thou already weary of the way,
Thou who hast yet but half the way gone o'er?
Get up, and lift thy burthen; lo, before
Thy feet the road goes stretching far away.
If thou already faint who art but come
Through half thy pilgrimage, with fellows gay,
Love, youth, and hope, under the rosy bloom
And temperate airs of early breaking day—
Look yonder, how the heavens stoop and gloom.
There cease the trees to shade, the flowers to spring,
And the angels leave thee. What wilt thou become
Through yon drear stretch of dismal wandering,
Lonely and dark? *I shall take courage, friend,*
For comes not every step more near the end.

WRITTEN ON CRAMOND BEACH.

FAREWELL, old playmate! on thy sandy shore
My lingering feet will leave their print no more;
To thy loved side I never may return.
I pray thee, old companion, make due mourn
For the wild spirit who so oft has stood
Gazing in love and wonder on thy flood.
The form is now departing far away,
That half in anger, oft, and half in play,
Thou hast pursued with thy white showers of foam.
Thy waters daily will besiege the home
I loved among the rocks; but there will be
No laughing cry, to hail thy victory,
Such as was wont to greet thee, when I fled,
With hurried footsteps and averted head,
Like fallen monarch, from my venturous stand,
Chased by the billows far along the sand.
And when at eventide thy warm waves drink
The amber clouds, that in their bosom sink;
When sober twilight over thee has spread
Her purple pall, when the glad day is dead,
My voice no more will mingle with the dirge
That rose in mighty moaning from thy surge,
Filling with awful harmony the air,
When thy vast soul and mine were joined in prayer.

OLD CRIES.

Oh ! dearly do I love "Old Cries,"
That touch my heart and bid me look
On "Bough-pots" plucked 'neath summer skies,
And "Water-cresses" from the brook.
It may be vain, it may be weak,
To list when common voices speak;
But rivers with their broad deep course,
Pour from a mean and unmarked source;
And so my warmest tide of soul
From strange, unheeded springs will roll.

"Old cries," "Old cries"—there is not one
But hath a mystic tissue spun
Around it, flinging on the ear
A magic mantle rich and dear,
From "Hautboys," pottled in the sun,
To the loud wish which cometh when
The tune of midnight waits is done,
With "A merry Christmas, gentlemen,
And a Happy New Year."

"Three bunches a penny, Primroses!"
Oh, dear is the greeting of Spring;
When she offers her dew-spangled posies,
The fairest Creation can bring.

"Three bunches a penny, Primroses!"
The echo resounds in the mart;
And the simple cry often uncloses
The worldly bars grating man's heart.

We reflect, we contrive, and we reckon
How best we can gather up wealth;
We go where bright finger-posts beckon,
Till we wander from Nature and Health.

But the "old cry" shall burst on our scheming,
The song of Primroses shall flow,
And "Three bunches a penny" set dreaming
Of all that we loved long ago.

It brings visions of meadow and mountain,
Of valley, and streamlet, and hill,
When Life's ocean but played in a fountain—
Ah, would that it sparkled so still!

It conjures back shadowless hours
When we threaded the dark forest ways;
When our hand went seeking the flowers,
And our lips were shouting their praise.

The perfume and tint of the blossom
Are as fresh in vale, dingle, and glen;
But say, is the pulse of our bosom
As warm and as bounding as then?

"Three bunches a penny, Primroses!"
"Three bunches a penny, come buy!"—
A blessing on all the Spring posies,
And good-will for the poor ones who cry.

"Lavender, sweet Lavender!"
With "Cherry Ripe!" is coming;
While the droning beetles whir,
And merry bees are humming.

"Lavender, sweet Lavender!"
Oh, pleasant is the crying;
While the rose leaves scarcely stir,
And downy moths are flying.

Oh, dearly do I love "Old Cries,"
Your "Lilies all a-blowing!"
Your blossoms blue still wet with dew,
"Sweet Violets all a-growing!"

Oh, happy were the days methink
In truth the best of any;
When "Periwinkles, winkles, winks!
Allured my last lone penny.

Oh, what had I to do with cares
That bring the frown and furrow,
When "Walnuts" and "Fine mellow pears"
Beat Catalani thorough.

Full dearly do I love "Old Cries,"
And always turn to hear them;
And though they cause me some few sighs,
Those sighs do but endear them.

My heart is like the fair sea-shell,
There's music ever in it;
Though bleak the shore where it may dwell
Some power still lives to win it.

When music fills the shell no more,
'Twill be all crushed and scattered;
And when this heart's deep tone is o'er,
'Twill all be cold and shattered.

Oh, vain will be the hope to break
Its last and dreamless slumbers;
When "Old Cries" come, and fail to wake
Its deep and fairy numbers.

THE OLD STOIC.

Riches I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn;
The lust of fame was but a dream,
That vanished with the morn.

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me,
Is, "Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty!"

Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
'Tis all that I implore;
In life and death, a shameless soul,
With courage to endure.

STANZAS.

OFTEN rebuked, yet always back returning
To those first feelings that were born with me,
And leaving busy chase of wealth and learning
For idle dreams of things which cannot be:

To-day, I will not seek the shadowy region;
Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear;
And visions rising legion after legion,
Bring the unreal world too strangely near.

I'll walk, but not in old heroic traces,
And not in paths of high morality,
And not among the half-distinguished faces,
The clouded forms of long past history.

I'll walk where my own nature would be leading:
It vexes me to choose another guide:
Where the grey flocks in ferny glens are feeding;
Where the wild wind blows on the mountain side.

A DEATH SCENE.

"O Day! he cannot die
When thou so fair art shining!
O Sun, in such a glorious sky,
So tranquilly reclining;

He cannot leave thee now,
While fresh west winds are blowing,
And all around his youthful brow
Thy cheerful light is glowing!

Edward, awake, awake—
The golden evening gleams
Warm and bright on Arden's lake—
Arouse thee from thy dreams!

Beside thee, on my knee,
My fairest friend, I pray
That thou to cross the eternal sea,
Wouldst yet one hour delay:

I hear its billows roar—
I see them foaming high;
But no glimpse of a further shore
Has blest my straining eye.

Believe not what they urge
Of Eden isles beyond;
Turn back, from that tempestuous surge,
To thine own native land.

It is not death, but pain
That struggles in thy breast—
Nay, rally, Edward, rouse again;
I cannot let thee rest!"

One look that sore reproved me
For the woe I could not bear—
One mute look of suffering moved me
To repent my useless prayer:

And, with sudden check, the heaving
Of distraction passed away;
Not a sign of further grieving
Stirred my soul that awful day.

Paled, at length, the sweet sun setting;
Sunk to peace the twilight breeze:
Summer dews fell softly, wetting
Glen, and glade, and silent trees.

Then his eyes began to weary,
Weighed beneath a mortal sleep;
And their orbs grew strangely dreary,
Clouded even as they would weep.

But they wept not, but they changed not,
Never moved and never closed;
Trembled still, and still they ranged not—
Wandered not, nor yet reposed!

So I knew that he was dying—
Stooped, and raised his languid head;
Felt no breath, and heard no sighing,
So I knew that he was dead.

REMEMBRANCE.

Cold in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,
Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!
Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,
Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,
Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover
Thy noble heart for ever, ever more?

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers,
From those brown hills, have melted into spring:
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering!

Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,
While the world's tide is bearing me along;
Other desires and other hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!

No later light has lightened up my heaven,
No second morn has ever shone for me;
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But when the days of golden dreams had perished,
And even despair was powerless to destroy;
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened, and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion—
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine:
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again?

LAST LINES.

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God, within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life—that in me has rest,
As I—undying Life—have power in thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by thine infinity;
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,
Nor atom that his might could render void:
Thou—THOU art Being and Breath,
And what THOU art may never be destroyed.

THE BROTHERS.

A SCENE FROM '98.

——"*Oh! give me truths,*
For I am weary of the surfaces,
And die of inanition."—EMERSON.

I.

'Tis midnight, falls the lamplight dull and sickly
On a pale and anxious crowd,
Through the court, and round the judges, thronging thickly,
With prayers, they dare not speak aloud.
Two youths, two noble youths, stand prisoners at the bar—
You can see them through the gloom—
In the pride of life and manhood's beauty, there they are
Awaiting their death doom.

II.

All eyes an earnest watch on them are keeping,
Some, sobbing, turn away,
And the strongest men can hardly see for weeping,
So noble and so loved were they.
Their hands are locked together, those young brothers,
As before the judge they stand—
They feel not the deep grief that moves the others,
For they die for Fatherland.

III.

They are pale, but it is not fear that whitens
On each proud, high brow,
For the triumph of the martyr's glory brightens
Around them even now.
They sought to free their land from thrall of stranger;
Was it treason? Let them die;
But their blood will cry to Heaven—the Avenger
Yet will hearken from on high.

IV.

Before them, shrinking, cowering, scarcely human,
The base Informer bends,
Who, Judas-like, could sell the blood of true men,
While he clasped their hand as friends.
Aye, could fondle the young children of his victim—
Break bread with his young wife,
At the moment that for gold his perjured dictum
Sold the husband and the father's life.

V.

There is silence in the midnight—eyes are keeping
Troubled watch till forth the jury come;
There is silence in the midnight—eyes are weeping—
Guilty!—is the fatal uttered doom.
For a moment, o'er the brothers' noble faces,
Came a shadow sad to see;
Then, silently, they rose up in their places,
And embraced each other fervently.

VI.

Oh! the rudest heart might tremble at such sorrow,
The rudest cheek might blanch at such a scene:
Twice the judge essayed to speak the word—to-morrow—
Twice faltered, as a woman he had been.
To-morrow!—Fain the elder would have spoken,
Prayed for respite, tho' it is not Death he fears;
But, thoughts of home and wife his heart hath broken,
And his words are stopped by tears.

VII.

But the youngest—oh, he spoke out bold and clearly:—
"I have no ties of children or of wife;
Let me die—but spare the brother who more dearly
Is loved by me than life."—
Pale martyrs, ye may cease, your days are numbered;
Next noon your sun of life goes down;
One day between the sentence and the scaffold—
One day between the torture and the crown!

VIII.

A hymn of joy is rising from creation;
Bright the azure of the glorious summer sky,
But human hearts weep sore in lamentation,
For the brothers are led forth to die.
Ay, guard them with your cannon and your lances—
So of old came martyrs to the stake;
Aye, guard them—see the people's flashing glances,
For these noble two are dying for their sake.

IX.

Yet none spring forth their bonds to sever;
Ah! methinks, had I been there,
I'd have dared a thousand deaths ere ever
The sword should touch their hair.
It falls!—there is a shriek of lamentation
From the weeping crowd around;
They're stilled—the noblest within the nation—
The noblest heads lie bleeding on the ground.

X.

Years have passed since that fatal scene of dying,
Yet, lifelike to this day,
In their coffins still those severed heads are lying,
Kept by angels from decay.
Oh, they preach to us, those still and pallid features—
Those pale lips still implore us, from their graves,
To strive for our birthright as God's creatures,
Or die, if we can but live as slaves.

SONGS OF FAREWELL.

DEATH.

"*Leaves and clustered fruits, and flowers eterne,*
Eternal to the world, but not to me."—HOOD.

THE Spring will come again, dear friends,
The Swallow o'er the Sea;
The bud will hang upon the bough,
The blossom on the tree;
And many a pleasant sound will rise to greet her on her way,
The voice of bird, and leaf, and stream, and warm winds in their play;
Ah! sweet the airs that round her breathe! and bountiful is she,
She bringeth all the things that fresh, and sweet, and hopeful be;
She scatters promise on the earth with open hand and free,
But not for me, my friends,
But not for me!

Summer will come again, dear friends,
Low murmurs of the Bee
Will rise through the long sunny day
Above the flowery lea;

And deep the dreamy woods will own the slumbrous spell
she weaves,
And send a greeting, mixed with sighs, through all their
quivering leaves.
Oh, precious are her glowing gifts! and plenteous is she,
She bringeth all the lovely things that bright and fragrant
be;
She scatters fulness on the Earth with lavish hand and free,
But not for me, my friends,
But not for me!

Autumn will come again, dear friends,
His spirit-touch shall be
With gold upon the harvest-field,
With crimson on the tree;
He passeth o'er the silent woods, they wither at his breath,
Slow fading in a still decay, a change that is not Death.
Oh! rich and liberal, and wise, and provident is he!
He taketh to his Garner-house the things that ripened be,
He gathereth his store from Earth, and silently—
And he will gather me, my friends,
He will gather me!

A CHARACTER.

So noble that he cannot see
  He stands in aught above the rest,
But does his greatness easily,
  And mounts his scaffold with a jest;

Not vaunting any daily death,
  Because he scorns the thing that dies,
And not in love with any breath
  That might proclaim him grand or wise.

Not much concerned with schemes that show
  The counterchange of weak with strong,
But never passing by a woe,
  Nor sitting still to watch a wrong.

Of all hearts careful save his own;
  Most tender when he suffers most;
Wont, if a foe must be o'erthrown,
  To count, but never grudge the cost.

Sharp insight, severing with a glance
  Greater from less, from substance shade;
Faith, in gross darkness of mischance
  Unable to be much afraid.

Out-looking eyes that seek and scan,
  Ready to love what they behold;
Quick reverence for his brother-man;
  Quick sense where gilding is not gold.

Such impulse in his self-control,
  It seems a voluntary grace,
The careless grandeur of a soul
  That holds no mirror to its face.

True sympathy a light that grows,
  And broadens like the summer morn's;
A hope that trusts before it knows,
  Being out of tune with all the scorns.

On-moving, temperately intent
  On radiant ends by means as bright,
And never cautious, but content
  With all the bitter fruits of right.

Under this shade the tired may lie,
  Worn with the greatness of their way;
Under this shield the brave may die,
  Aware that they have won the day.

For such a leader lifts his times
  Out of the limits of the night,
And, falling grandly, while he climbs,
  Falls with his face toward the height.

THE LITTLE FAIR SOUL.

A LITTLE fair soul that knew no sin,
  Looked over the edge of Paradise,
And saw one striving to come in,
  With fear and tumult in his eyes.

"Oh, brother, is it you?" he cried;
  "Your face is like a breath from home;
Why do you stay so long outside?
  I am athirst for you to come!

"Tell me first how our mother fares,
  And has she wept too much for me!"
"White are her cheeks and white her hairs,
  But not from gentle tears for thee."

"Tell me, where are our sisters gone?"
  "Alas, I left them weary and wan."
"And tell me is the baby grown?"
  "Alas! he is almost a man!

"Cannot you break the gathering days,
  And let the light of death come through,
Ere his feet stumble in the maze
  Crossed safely by so few, so few?

"For like a crowd upon the sea
That darkens till you find no shore,
So was that face of life to me,
Until I sank for evermore.

"And like an army in the snow
My days went by, a treacherous train,
Each smiling as he struck his blow,
Until I lay among them slain."

"Oh, brother, there was a path so clear!"
"There might be, but I never sought."
"Oh, brother, there was a sword so near!"
"There might be, but I never fought!"

"Yet seek this needless gloom aside,
For you are come to the gate at last!"
Then in despair that soul replied,
"The gate is fast! the gate is fast!"

"I cannot move this mighty weight,
I cannot find this golden key;
But hosts of heaven around us wait,
And none has ever said 'No' to me.

"Sweet Saint, put by thy palm and scroll,
And come and undo the door for me!"
"Rest thee still, thou little fair soul,
It is not mine to keep the key."

"Kind Angel, strike these doors apart!
The air without is dark and cold."
"Rest thee still, thou little pure heart,
Not for my word will they unfold."

Up all the shining heights he prayed
For that poor Shadow in the cold!
Still came the word, "Not ours to aid;
We cannot make the doors unfold."

But that poor shadow, still outside,
Wrung all the sacred air with pain;
And all the souls went up and cried,
Where never cry was heard in vain.

No eye beheld the pitying Face,
The answer none might understand,
But dimly through the silent space
Was seen the stretching of a Hand.

TWO LOVERS.

Two lovers by a moss-grown spring:
  They leaned soft cheeks together there,
  Mingled the dark and sunny hair,
And heard the wooing thrushes sing.
  O budding time!
  O love's blest prime!

Two wedded from the portal stept:
  The bells made happy carollings,
  The air was soft as fanning wings,
White petals on the pathway slept.
  O pure-eyed bride!
  O tender pride!

Two faces o'er a cradle bent:
  Two hands above the head were locked;
  These pressed each other while they rocked,
Those watched a life that love had sent.
  O solemn hour!
  O hidden power!

Two parents by the evening fire:
  The red light fell about their knees
  On heads that rose by slow degrees
Like buds upon the lily spire.
  O patient life!
  O tender strife!

The two still sat together there,
  The red light shone about their knees;
  But all the heads by slow degrees
Had gone and left that lonely pair.
  O voyage fast!
  O vanished past!

The red light shone upon the floor,
  And made the space between them wide;
  They drew their chairs up side by side,
Their pale cheeks joined, and said, "Once more!"
  O memories!
  O past that is!

ARION.

(HEROD, I. 24.)

ARION, whose melodic soul
Taught the dithyramb to roll
Like forest fires, and sing
Olympian suffering,

Had carried his diviner lore
From Corinth to the sister shore
Where Greece could largelier be,
Branching o'er Italy.

Then weighted with his glorious name
And bags of gold, abroad he came
'Mid harsh seafaring men
To Corinth bound again.

The sailors eyed the bags and thought:
"The gold is good, the man is nought—
And who shall track the wave
That opens for his grave?"

With brawny arms and cruel eyes
They press around him where he lies
In sleep beside his lyre,
Hearing the Muses quire.

He waked and saw this wolf-faced Death
Breaking the dream that filled his breath
With inspiration strong
Of yet unchanted song.

"Take, take my gold, and let me live!"
He prayed, as kings do when they give
Their all with royal will,
Holding born kingship still.

To rob the living they refuse,
One death or other he must choose,
Either the watery pall
Or wounds and burial.

"My solemn robe then let me don,
Give me high space to stand upon,
That dying I may pour
A song unsung before."

It pleased them well to grant this prayer,
To hear for nought how it might fare
With men who paid their gold
For what a poet sold.

In flowing stole, his eyes aglow
With inward fire, he neared the prow
And took his godlike stand,
The cithara in hand.

The wolfish men all shrank aloof,
And feared this singer might be proof
Against their murderous power,
After his lyric hour.

But he, in liberty of song,
Fearless of death or other wrong,
With full spondaic toll
Poured forth his mighty soul:

Poured forth the strain his dream had taught,
A nome with lofty passion fraught,
Such as makes battles won
On fields of Marathon.

The last long vowels trembled then
As awe within those wolfish men:
They said, with mutual stare,
Some god was present there.

But lo! Arion leaped on high,
Ready, his descant done, to die;
Not asking, "Is it well?"
Like a pierced eagle fell.

"O, MAY I JOIN THE CHOIR INVISIBLE."

"*Longum illud tempus, quum non ero, magis me movet, quam hoc exiguum.*"—CICERO, ad Att., XII. 18.

O, MAY I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues.

So to live in heaven:
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.
So we inherit that sweet purity
For which we struggled, failed, and agonised
With widening retrospect that bred despair.
Rebellious flesh that would not be subdued,
A vicious parent shaming still its child,
Poor anxious penitence, is quick dissolved;
Its discords, quenched by meeting harmonies,
Die in the large and charitable air.
And all our rarer, better, truer self,
That sobbed religiously in yearning song,
That watched to ease the burthen of the world,

Laboriously tracing what must be,
And what may yet be better—saw within
A worthier image for the sanctuary,
And shaped it forth before the multitude
Divinely human, raising worship so
To higher reverence more mixed with love—
That better self shall live till human Time
Shall fold its eyelids, and the human sky
Be gathered like a scroll within the tomb
Unread for ever.

This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us who strive to follow. May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardour, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty—
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible,
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

1867.

INCOMPLETENESS.

NOTHING resting in its own completeness
Can have worth or beauty: but alone
Because it leads and tends to farther sweetness,
Fuller, higher, deeper than its own.

Spring's real glory dwells not in the meaning,
Gracious though it be, of her blue hours;
But is hidden in her tender leaning
To the Summer's richer wealth of flowers.

Dawn is fair, because the mists fade slowly
Into Day, which floods the world with light;
Twilight's mystery is so sweet and holy
Just because it ends in starry night.

Childhood's smiles unconscious graces borrow
From Strife that in a far-off future lies;
And angel glances (veiled now by Life's sorrow)
Draw our hearts to some belovèd eyes.

Life is only bright when it proceedeth
Towards a truer, deeper Life above;
Human Love is sweetest when it leadeth
To a more divine and perfect Love.

Learn the mystery of Progression duly:
Do not call each glorious change, Decay;
But know we only hold our treasures truly,
When it seems as if they passed away.

Nor dare to blame God's gifts for incompleteness;
In that want their beauty lies: they roll
Towards some infinite depth of love and sweetness,
Bearing onward man's reluctant soul.

ROTHESAY BAY.

Fu' yellow lie the corn-rigs
  Far doun the braid hillside;
It is the brawest harstfield
  Alang the shores o' Clyde,—
And I'm a puir harst-lassie
  Wha stands the lee-lang day
Shearing the corn-rigs of Ardbeg
  Aboon sweet Rothesay Bay.

O I had ance a true love,—
  Now, I hae nane ava;
And I had three braw brithers,
  But I hae tint them a';
My father and my mither
  Sleep i' the mools[1] this day,
I sit my lane amang the rigs
  Aboon sweet Rothesay Bay.

It's a bonnie bay at morning
  And bonnier at the noon,
But it's bonniest when the sun draps
  And red comes up the moon:
When the mist creeps o'er the Cumbrays,
  And Arran peaks are grey,
And the great black hills, like sleepin' kings,
  Sit grand roun' Rothesay Bay.

[1] Graves.

Then a bit sigh stirs my bosom,
  And a saut tear blin's my e'e,—
And I think o' that far Countrie
  Whaur I wad like to be!
But I rise content i' the morning,
  To wark while wark I may,
I' the yellow harst-field of Ardbeg
  Aboon sweet Rothesay Bay.

SEMPER FIDELIS.

"*Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted.*"

THINK you, had we two lost fealty, something would not, as I sit
With this book upon my lap here, come and overshadow it?
Hide with spectral mists the pages, under each familiar leaf
Lurk, and clutch my hand that turns it with the icy clutch of grief?

Think you, were we twain divided, not by distance, time, or aught
That the world calls separation, but we smile at, better taught,
That I should not feel the dropping of each link you did untwine
Clear as if you sat before me with your true eyes fixed on mine?

That I should not, did you crumble as the other false friends do
To the dust of broken idols, know it without sight of you,
By some shadow darkening daylight in the fickle skies of Spring,
By foul fears from household corners crawling over everything?

If that awful gulf were opening which makes two, however near,
Parted more than we were parted, dwell we in each hemisphere,—
Could I sit here, smiling quiet on this book within my hand,
And while earth was cloven beneath me, feel no shock nor understand?

No, you cannot, could not alter. No, my faith builds safe on yours,
Rock-like; though the winds and waves howl, its foundation still endures:
By a man's will—"See, I hold thee: thou art mine, and mine shall be."
By a woman's patience—"Sooner doubt I my own soul than thee."

So, Heaven mind us! we'll together once again take counsel sweet;
Though this hand of mine drops empty, that blank wall my blank eyes meet:
Life may flow on: men be faithless,—aye, forsooth, and women too!
ONE is true; and as He liveth, I believe in truth—and *you*.

PHILIP MY KING.

Look at me with thy large brown eyes,
Philip my king,
Round whom the enshadowing purple lies
Of babyhood's royal dignities:
Lay on my neck thy tiny hand
With love's invisible sceptre laden;
I am thine Esther to command
Till thou shalt find a queen-handmaiden,
Philip my king.

O the day when thou goest a-wooing,
Philip my king!
When some beautiful lips are suing,
And some gentle heart's bars undoing
Thou dost enter, love-crowned, and there
Sittest love glorified. Rule kindly,
Tenderly, over thy kingdom fair,
For we that love, ah! we love so blindly,
Philip my king.

Up from thy sweet mouth,—up to thy brow,
Philip my king!
The spirit that now lies sleeping now
May rise like a giant and make men bow
As to one heaven-chosen among his peers:

My Saul, than thy brethren taller and fairer,
Let me behold thee in future years;—
Yet thy head needeth a circlet rarer,
Philip my king.

—A wreath not of gold, but palm, one day,
Philip my king
Thou too must tread, as we trod, a way
Thorny and cruel and cold and grey:
Rebels within thee and foes without,
Will snatch at thy crown. But march on, glorious
Martyr, yet monarch: till angels shout
As thou sit'st at the feet of God victorious
"Philip the king!"

THOUGHTS IN A WHEAT-FIELD.

"*The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels.*"

In his wide field walks the Master,
In his fair fields, ripe for harvest,
Where the evening sun shines slant-wise
On the rich ears heavy bending;
Saith the Master: "It is time."
Though no leaf shows brown decadence,
And September's nightly frost-bite
Only redden the horizon,
"It is full time," saith the Master.
The wise Master, "It is time."

Lo, He looks. That look compelling
Brings his labourers to the harvest;
Quick they gather, as in autumn
Passage-birds in cloudy eddies
Drop upon the seaside fields;
White wings have they and white raiment,
White feet shod with swift obedience,
Each lays down his golden palm-branch,
And uprears his shining sickle,
"Speak, O Master,—is it time?"

O'er the fields the servants hasten,
Where the full-stored ears droop downwards,
Humble with their weight of harvest:

Where the empty ears wave upward,
And the gay tares flaunt in rows:
But the sickles, the sharp sickles,
Flash dew dawn at their appearing,
Songs are heard in earth and heaven,
For the reapers are the angels,
And it is the harvest time.

O Great Master, are Thy footsteps
Even now upon the mountains?
Art Thou walking in Thy wheat-field?
Are the snowy wingéd reapers
Gathering in the silent air?
Are thy signs abroad, the glowing
Of the distant sky, blood reddened,—
And the near fields trodden, blighted,
Choked by gaudy tares triumphant,—
Sure it must be harvest time?

Who shall know the Master's coming?
Whether it be at dawn or sunset,
When night dews weigh down the wheat-ears,
Or while noon rides high in heaven,
Sleeping lies the yellow field?
Only, may Thy voice, Good Master,
Peal above the reaper's chorus,
And dull sound of sheaves slow falling,—
"Gather all into My garner,
For it is My harvest time."

DREAM-LAND.

WHERE sunless rivers weep
Their waves into the deep,
She sleeps a charmèd sleep:
  Awake her not.
Led by a single star,
She came from very far
To seek where shadows are
  Her pleasant lot.

She left the rosy morn,
She left the fields of corn,
For twilight cold and lorn
  And water springs.
Through sleep, as through a veil
She sees the sky look pale,
And hears the nightingale
  That sadly sings.

Rest, rest, a perfect rest
Shed over brow and breast;
Her face is towards the west,
The purple land.
She cannot see the grain
Ripening on hill and plain;
She cannot feel the rain
  Upon her hand.

Rest, rest, for evermore
Upon a mossy shore;
Rest, rest at the heart's core
  Till time shall cease:
Sleep that no pain shall wake,
Night that no morn shall break
Till joy shall overtake
  Her perfect peace.

A BIRTHDAY.

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these,
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it with doves and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves and silver fleur-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me.

CONFLUENTS.

As rivers seek the sea,
Much more deep than they,
So my soul seeks thee,
Far away:
As running rivers moan
On their course alone,
So I moan,
Left alone.

As the delicate rose
To the sun's sweet strength
Doth herself unclose,
Breadth and length:
So spreads my heart to thee,
Unveiled utterly,
I to thee
Utterly.

As morning dew exhales
Sunwards pure and free,
So my spirit fails
After thee:
As dew leaves not a trace
On the green earth's face;
I, no trace
On thy face.

Its goal the river knows,
Dewdrops find a way,
Sunlight cheers the rose
In her day:
Shall I, lone sorrow past,
Find thee at last?
Sorrow past,
Thee at last?

ECHO.

Come to me in the silence of the night;
  Come in the speaking silence of a dream;
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright
  As sunlight on a stream;
    Come back in tears,
O memory, hope, love of finished years.

O dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,
  Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,
Where souls brimful of love abide and meet;
  Where thirsting, longing eyes
    Watch the slow door
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may give
  My very life again though cold in death:
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give
  Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:
    Speak low, lean low,
As long ago, my love, how long ago!

THE HOUR AND THE GHOST.

Bride.

O Love, love, hold me fast,
He draws me away from thee;
I cannot stem the blast,
Nor the cold strong sea:
Far away a light shines
Beyond the hills and pines;
It is lit for me.

Bridegroom.

I have thee close, my dear,
No terror can come near;
Only far off the northern light shines clear.

Ghost.

Come with me, fair and false,
To our home, come home.
It is my voice that calls:
Once thou wast not afraid
When I wooed, and said,
"Come, our nest is newly made,"—
Now cross the tossing foam.

Bride.

Hold me one moment longer,
He taunts me with the past,
His clutch is waxing stronger,
Hold me fast, hold me fast.
He draws me from thy heart,
And I cannot withhold:
He bids my spirit depart
With him into the cold:
O bitter vows of old!

Bridegroom.

Lean on me, hide thine eyes:
Only ourselves, earth and skies,
Are present here: be wise.

Ghost.

Lean on me, come away,
I will guide and steady:
Come, for I will not stay:
Come, for house and bed are ready.
Ah, sure bed and house,
For better and worse, for life and death:
Goal won with shortening breath:
Come, crown our vows.

Bride.

One moment, one more word,
While my heart beats still,

While my breath is stirred
By fainting will.
O friend forsake me not,
Forget not as I forgot:
But keep thy heart for me,
Keep thy faith true and bright;
Through the lone cold winter night
Perhaps I may come to thee.

Bridegroom.

Nay, peace, my darling, peace:
Let these dreams and terrors cease;
Who spoke of death or change or aught but ease?

Ghost.

O fair, frail sin,
O poor harvest gathered in!
Thou shalt visit him again
To watch his heart grow cold;
To know the gnawing pain
I knew of old;
To see one much more fair
Fill up the vacant chair,
Fill his heart, his children bear:—
While thou and I together
In the outcast weather
Toss and howl and spin.

REST.

O EARTH, lie heavily upon her eyes;
Seal her sweet eyes weary of watching, Earth;
Lie close around her; leave no room for mirth
With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs.
She hath no questions, she hath no replies,
Hushed in and curtained with a blessed dearth
Of all that irked her from the hour of birth;
With stillness that is almost Paradise.
Darkness more clear than noonday holdeth her,
Silence more musical than any song;
Even her very heart has ceased to stir:
Until the morning of Eternity
Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be;
And when she wakes she will not think it long.

LOVE LIES BLEEDING.

Love that is dead and buried, yesterday
  Out of his grave rose up before my face;
  No recognition in his look, no trace
Of memory in his eyes dust-dimmed and grey.
While I, remembering, found no word to say,
  But felt my quickened heart leap in its place;
  Caught afterglow thrown back from long set days,
Caught echoes of all music passed away.
Was this indeed to meet?—I mind me yet,
  In youth we met when hope and love were quick,
    We parted with hope dead, but love alive:
  I mind me how we parted when heart sick,
    Remembering, loving, hopeless, weak to strive:—
Was this to meet? Not so, we have not met.

THE WORLD.

By day she wooes me, soft, exceeding fair:
  But all night as the moon so changeth she;
  Loathsome and foul with hideous leprosy
And subtle serpents gliding in her hair.
By day she wooes me to the outer air,
  Ripe fruits, sweet flowers, and full satiety:
  But through the night a beast she grins at me,
A very monster void of love and prayer.
By day she stands a lie: by night she stands,
  In all the naked horror of the truth,
With pushing horns and clawed and clutching hands.
Is this a friend indeed; that I should sell
  My soul to her, give her my life and youth,
Till my feet, cloven too, take hold on hell?

LATER LIFE.

VI.

We lack, yet cannot fix upon the lack:
  Not this, nor that; yet somewhat, certainly.
  We see the things we do not yearn to see
Around us: and what see we glancing back?
Lost hopes that leave our hearts upon the rack,
  Hopes that were never ours, yet seemed to be,
  For which we steered on life's salt stormy sea
Braving the sunstroke and the frozen pack.
If thus to look behind is all in vain,
  And all in vain to look to left or right,
Why face we not our future once again,
Launching with hardier hearts across the main,
  Straining dim eyes to catch the invisible sight,
And strong to bear ourselves in patient pain?

LATER LIFE.

XXVI.

LIFE is full of numbness and of balk,
Of haltingness and baffled short-coming,
Of promise unfulfilled, of everything
That is puffed vanity and empty talk:
Its very bud hangs cankered on the stalk,
Its very song-bird trails a broken wing,
Its very Spring is not indeed like Spring,
But sighs like Autumn round an aimless walk.
This Life we live is dead for all its breath;
Death's self it is set off on pilgrimage,
Travelling with tottering steps the first short stage:
The second stage is one mere desert dust
Where Death sits veiled amid creation's rust:
Unveil thy face, O Death, who art not Death.

THE SILENT POOL.

BENEATH the surface of the crystal water
Metallic shines a floor of frosted green;
Uneven, like a depth of emerald lichen,
Thro' ranks of dark weeds gleams its fairy sheen.

Horsetails of varied growth and plumage sombre,
Like ancient warriors in dark armour dight;
Like fair young maiden's arms the prism-hued grass-leaves,
Clinging in fond embrace before the fight.

Round and about this Silent Pool the ash-trees
Bend down in thirsty eagerness to drink;
Amid their grey-green leaves show, keenly vivid,
Long feathering laurel-sprays that clothe the brink.

High up in air, some thirty feet or over,
A wild white rose above the footpath clings;
Fearless she clasps a tough unyielding ash-trunk,
And o'er the Pool gay wreaths of blossom flings.

Idly I drop a pebble in the water,
Each sombre horsetail nods a plumed head;
Like pearl or opal gem, the stone sinks slowly,
Transmuted ere it reach its emerald bed.

Mystic the emerald hue beneath the water,
  Weird-like the tint by which the scene is haunted;
Vainly I ask my senses if they wake,
  Or is the deep and silent Pool enchanted?

Now as the widening ripple circles shoreward,
  The plumed dusky warriors file away;
The tender grass-blades wave bright arms imploring,
  Streaking with tender green the grim array.

Leafless, a gaunt-armed giant oak, storm-scathed,
  In gnarled bareness overhangs the Pool;
Fantastic shows its knotted limbs contorted,
  Grotesque and grey among the leafage cool.

Caught here and there amid the feathered foliage
  Are glimpses of the far hill's softened blue,
While overhead the clouds, snow-white and fleecy,
  Float slowly on a yet intenser hue.

From Norman times 'tis said, maybe from Saxon,
  This calm tree-circled lake secluded lay,
Pure as an infant's breast, its crystal mirror
  Baring its inmost depths to gaze of day.

Some specks there are, some clay-flakes on its surface,
  To open view revealed, like childish sin;
No roots have they, nor downward growth, to canker
  The purity that dwells the Pool within.

Mystic the em'rald hue beneath the water,
Fairy the tint by which the scene is haunted;
Vainly I ask my senses if they wake,
Or is the clear and silent Pool enchanted?

The swallow flits two-bodied o'er the water,
Its four wings like a windmill's sails outspread;
Through the dark horsetails shoot the silver grayling,
To seize the May-fly skimming overhead.

Flying from lawless love—so runs the story—
A maiden plunged beneath this silent wave;
There, where the holly sits the bank so closely,
She sprang and sank—beyond all power to save.

Six hundred years and more since that dark legend,
Legend that stained a king with lasting shame—
And still the deep and silent Pool lies crystal,
Crystal and clear as that poor maiden's fame.

Yet mystic is the hue beneath the water;
Unreal the tint by which the scene is haunted;—
Again I ask my senses if they wake,
Or if the Silent Pool's indeed enchanted?

DIVIDED.

An empty sky, a world of heather,
Purple of foxglove, yellow of broom ;
We two among them wading together,
Shaking out honey, treading perfume.

Crowds of bees are giddy with clover,
Crowds of grasshoppers skip at our feet,
Crowds of larks at their matins hang over,
Thanking the Lord for a life so sweet.

Flusheth the rise with her purple favour,
Gloweth the cleft with her golden ring,
'Twixt the two brown butterflies waver,
Lightly settle, and sleepily swing.

We two walk till the purple dieth
And short dry grass under foot is brown,
But one little streak at a distance lieth,
Green like a ribbon and prank the down.

II.

Over the grass we stepped unto it,
And God He knoweth how blithe we were !
Never a voice to bid us eschew it:
Hey the green ribbon that showed so fair !

Hey the green ribbon! we kneeled beside it,
We parted the grasses dewy and sheen;
Drop over drop there filtered and slided
A tiny bright beck that trickled between.

Tinkle, tinkle, sweetly it sung to us,
Light was our talk as of faëry bells—
Faëry wedding-bells faintly rung to us
Down in their fortunate parallels.

Hand in hand, while the sun peered over,
We lapped the grass on that youngling spring;
Swept back its rushes, smoothed its clover,
And said, "Let us follow it westering."

III.

A dappled sky, a world of meadows,
Circling above us the black rooks fly
Forward, backward; lo, their dark shadows
Flit on the blossoming tapestry.

Flit on the beck, for her long grass parteth
As hair from a maid's bright eyes blown back;
And, lo, the sun like a lover darteth
His flattering smile on her wayward track.

Sing on! we sing in the glorious weather,
Till one steps over the tiny strand,
So narrow, in sooth, that still together
On either brink we go hand in hand.

The beck grows wider, the hands must sever.
On either margin, our songs all done,
We move apart, while she singeth ever,
Taking the course of the stooping sun.

He prays, 'Come over'—I may not follow;
I cry, 'Return'—but he cannot come:
We speak, we laugh, but with voices hollow;
Our hands are hanging our hearts are numb.

IV.

A breathing sigh, a sigh for answer,
A little talking of outward things:
The careless beck is a merry dancer,
Keeping sweet time to the air she sings.

A little pain when the beck grows wider;
'Come to me now,—for her wavelets swell.'
'I may not cross'—and the voice beside her
Faintly reacheth, though heeded well.

No backward path; ah! no returning;
No second crossing that ripple's flow:
'Come to me now, for the west is burning;
Come ere it darkens;' 'Ah, no! ah, no!'

Then cries of pain, and arms outreaching—
The beck grows wider and swift and deep:
Passionate words as of one beseeching—
The loud beck drowns them; we walk and weep

V.

A yellow moon in splendour drooping,
A tired queen with her state oppressed,
Low by rushes and swordgrass stooping,
Lies she soft on the waves at rest.

The desert heavens have felt her sadness;
Her earth will weep her some dewy tears;
The wild beck ends her tune of gladness,
And goeth stilly as soul that fears.

We two walk on in our grassy places
On either marge of the moonlit flood,
With the moon's own sadness in our faces,
Where joy is withered, blossom and bud.

VI.

A shady freshness, chafers whirring,
A little piping of leaf-hid birds;
A flutter of wings, a fitful stirring,
A cloud to the eastward snowy as curds.

Bare grassy slopes, where kids are tethered
  Round valleys like nests all ferny-lined ;
Round hills, with fluttering tree-tops feathered,
  Swell high in their freckled robes behind.

A rose-flush tender, a thrill, a quiver,
  When golden gleams to the tree-tops glide ;
A flashing edge for the milk-white river,
  The beck, a river—with still sleek tide.

Broad and white, and polished as silver,
  On she goes under fruit-laden trees ;
Sunk in leafage cooeth the culver,
  And 'plaineth of love's disloyalties.

Glitters the dew and shines the river,
  Up comes the lily and dries her bell ;
But two are walking apart for ever,
  And wave their hands for a mute farewell.

VII.

A braver swell, a swifter sliding ;
  The river hasteth, her banks recede :
Wing-like sails on her bosom gliding
  Bear down the lily and drown the reed.

Stately prows are rising and bowing
  (Shouts of mariners winnow the air),
And level sands for banks endowing
  The tiny green ribbon that showed so fair.

While, O my heart! as white sails shiver,
And crowds are passing, and banks stretch wide,
How hard to follow, with lips that quiver,
That moving speck on the far-off side!

Farther, farther—I see it—know it—
My eyes brim over, it melts away;
Only my heart to my heart shall show it
As I walk desolate day by day.

VIII.

And yet I know past all doubting, truly—
A knowledge greater than grief can dim—
I know, as he loved, he will love me duly—
Yea, better—e'en better than I love him.

And as I walk by the vast calm river,
The awful river so dread to see,
I say, 'Thy breadth and thy depth for ever
Are bridged by his thoughts that cross to me.'

AN ANCIENT CHESS KING.

HAPLY some Rajah first in ages gone
  Amid his languid ladies finger'd thee,
  While a black nightingale, sun-swart as he,
Sang his one wife, love's passionate orison:
Haply thou may'st have pleased old Prester John
  Among his pastures, when full royally
  He sat in tent—grave shepherds at his knee—
While lamps of balsam winked and glimmered on.

What dost thou here? Thy masters are all dead;
  My heart is full of ruth and yearning pain
  At sight of thee, O king that hast a crown
Outlasting theirs, and tells of greatness fled
  Through cloud-hung nights of unabated rain
    And murmur of the dark majestic town.

WORK.

LIKE coral insects multitudinous
The minutes are whereof our life is made.
They build it up as in the deep's blue shade
It grows; it comes to light, and then, and thus
For both there is an end. The populous
Sea-blossoms close, our minutes that have paid
Life's debt of work are spent; the work is laid
Before their feet that shall come after us.
We may not stay to watch if it will speed;
The bard if on some luter's string his song
Live sweetly yet; the hero if his star
Doth shine. Work is its own best earthly meed,
Else have we none more than the sea-born throng
Who wrought these marvellous isles that bloom afar.

THE BALLAD OF THE BRIDES OF QUAIR.

A STILLNESS crept about the house;
At evenfall, in noon-tide glare,
Upon the silent hills looked forth
The many-windowed House of Quair.

The peacock on the terrace screamed;
Browsed on the lawn the timid hare;
The great trees grew i' the avenue,
Calm by the sheltered House of Quair.

The pool was still; around its brim
The alders sickened in the air;
There came no murmur from the streams,
Though nigh flowed Leithen, Tweed, and Quair.

The days hold on their wonted pace,
And men to court and camp repair
Their part to fill, or good or ill,
While women keep the House of Quair.

And one is clad in widow's weeds,
And one is maiden-like and fair,
And day by day they seek the paths
About the lonely fields of Quair.

To see the trout leap in the streams,
The summer clouds reflected there,
The maiden loves in pensive dreams
To hang o'er silver Tweed and Quair.

Within, in pall-black velvet clad,
Sits stately in her oaken chair—
A stately dame of ancient name—
The mother of the House of Quair.

Her daughter broiders by her side,
With heavy drooping golden hair,
And listens to her frequent plaint,—
"Ill fare the Brides that come to Quair."

"For more than one hath lived in pine,
And more than one hath died of care,
And more than one hath sorely sinned,
Left lonely in the House of Quair."

"Alas! and ere thy father died
I had not in his heart a share,
And now—may God forfend her ill—
Thy brother brings his Bride to Quair!"

She came: they kissed her in the hall,
They kissed her on the winding stair,
They led her to her chamber high,
The fairest in the House of Quair.

They bade her from the window look,
And mark the scene how passing fair,
Among whose ways the quiet days
Would linger o'er the House of Quair.

"'Tis fair," she said on looking forth,
"But what although 'twere bleak and bare"—
She looked the love she did not speak,
And broke the ancient curse of Quair.—

"Where'er he dwells, where'er he goes,
His dangers and his toils I share."
What need be said—she was not one
Of the ill-fated Brides of Quair.—

THE SONG OF A SUMMER STREAM.

A FEW months ago
I was singing through the snow,
Though the dead brown boughs gave no hope of summer shoots,
And my persevering fall
Seemed to be no use at all,
For the hard, hard frost would not let me reach the roots.

Then the mists hung chill
All along the wooded hill,
And the cold sad fog through my lonely dingles crept;
I was glad I had no power
To awake one tender flower
To a sure swift doom! I would rather that it slept.

Still I sang all alone
In the sweet old summer tone,
For the strong white ice could not hush me for a day;
Though no other voice was heard
But the bitter breeze that whirred
Past the gaunt, grey trunks on its wild and angry way.

So the dim days sped,
While everything seemed dead,
And my own poor flow seemed the only living sign;
And the keen stars shone
When the freezing night came on,
From the far, far heights, all so cold and crystalline.

A few months ago
I was singing through the snow!
But now the blessed sunshine is filling all the land,
And the memories are lost
Of the winter fog and frost,
In the presence of the summer with her full and glowing hand.

Now the woodlark comes to drink
At my cool and pearly brink,
And the lady-fern is bending to kiss my rainbow foam;
And the wild rose buds entwine
With the dark-leaved bramble-vine,
And the centuried oak is green around the bright-eyed squirrel's home.

O the full and glad content
That my little song is blent
With the all-melodious mingling of the choristers around!
I no longer sing alone
Through a chill surrounding moan,
For the very air is trembling with its wealth of summer sound.

Though the hope seemed long deferred,
Ere the south wind's whisper heard
Gave a promise of the passing of the weary winter days,
Yet the blessing was secure,
For the summer time was sure
When the lonely songs are gathered in the mighty choir of praise.

BARON GIOVANNI NICOTERA.

SALERMO, 1858.

SALERMO awaits amid the heat
Of August, for the words of doom.—
Nicotera and eighty men
Who followed him are here to meet
Award of justice :—it has come.
Follow, and hear the judgment, then.

Ergastolo—an evil name,
An evil thing, a hell on earth ;
Wherein no whisper evermore
Of hope shall enter ; nor the shame
Of stripes, and bonds, and brutal mirth,
Be loosed from life, till life is o'er.

The judge and prisoner, man to man,
Are met together ;—silent one,
With fiery face that in its prime
Looks from the prison changed and wan ;—
While speaks the other, having done
With life, and trembling at the time.

"My time is past: some new time wakes:—
I am an old man, I am weak,
I have not seen a face like yours;
And looking on it, my heart breaks
For such a doom as I must speak:—
I know no heart of man endures

"Such things as are before you now.
I pray you ere it be too late,
To seek some mercy for the sake
Of those that love you, and to bow
Unto the world, and kings and fate:—
You will not bend, but they can break.

"You that are helpless in their hands,
Keep your own heart, but speak some word
Of prayer for pardon and submit
To that strong law which stays and stands
A rock above the waves unstirred,
While you are dashed to death on it,

"In vain, in vain;—and lives of those
That followed you are cast away.
For them, for you, there yet is grace
If you will have it." The tears rose:
But answer made Nicotera,
Standing together face to face,—

"Domenico, I speak to you,
Not as the judge who serveth man,
But as the man who serveth God—

God who shall judge between us two :—
I say, I will not, if I can,
Retrace one step my feet have trod.

"You serve your King, and it is well;
He hath not failed you at your need,
Not yet,—and you have royal grace.
We serve our God—and you can tell
Our wages :—and if this indeed
Were all, you have the better place.

"But we have not been desolate
Of such divinest comfortings
As hitherto have borne us up;
With one inspired Apostolate,
Of trumpet-voice that round us rings,
One sanguine sacramental cup.

"And having heard and drunk, nowise
Can we but triumph, since God's light
Hath opened to us—Italy!
And hath unveiled before our eyes,
Far off, and unapproached, and bright,
His last dread angel, Liberty.

"The unseen, unborn face of one
Even as a mother cherisheth,
Who knoweth she shall live to bear
A living and most lovely son,
And yet must die before his breath
Upon her lips makes soft the air,—

"Though now we suffer for her sake,
Her living face we shall not see;
The throes are come, but not the birth.
For we no more shall writhe and wake,
And on our graves her foot shall be,
When she comes down to reign on earth"

. . . . .

All day the hammers fast and hard
Have riveted on feet and hands
The weight of irons they shall wear
Through the long dying, and the yard
With fettered pairs is filled, and stands
Nicotera amongst them there.

"For this that I have brought you to,
Children, forgive me ere we part;
A font of fire, a whole life's loss:
And yet I know that none of you
Forgiveth me, but in his heart
Blesseth me rather, for this cross.

"Through every hour of painful breath,
Henceforth our souls must carve their price,
Life's hope is past, life's purpose stays.
Better than life, better than death,
Is this the living sacrifice:
God keep us worthy all our days!

"The earliest martyrs, the unnamed
Saints, the forgotten rank and file
Of Christ's unconquered soldiery,

Under the same fierce suns that flamed
On the same bare and blasted isle,
Suffered in lifelong constancy.

"The same rocks echo the same clank
Of chains, the same taskmaster's stroke,
And grind of stone, and anvil's roar:
Ye go to drink the cup they drank;
And yet they live, their chains are broke,
Their martyrdom has long been o'er.

"God be with you! For me, they say
I go, kept back for such a meed
As man's heart faileth him to see:
Therefore forget me not, but pray
The grace be greater than the need;
What matter, if God go with me!

"No darkness is so deep, but white
Wings of the angels through can pierce;
Nor any chain such heaps lies in
But God's own hand can hold it light;
Nor is there any flame so fierce
But Christ himself can stand therein."

. . . . . .

The sunset comes; the guarded rank
Through thronging thousands of the town,
Gather on window, roof, and door,
With heavy step, and ceaseless clank,
To the dark ship is passing down,
That waits to take them from the shore.

Ah Saints, the bare and bleeding feet!
Ah Christ, the bruised and bleeding hands!
Ah God, the pallid faces there!
One low long sob goes through the street,
One passionate curse God understands,
One bitter agony of prayer.

A dream of liquid colour! lo,
The hills that slope into the sea
Range back from rose to violet
And melting into indigo,
In farthest mountain mystery,
Upon the stainless East are set.

The fishing fleet at anchor-hold
Leans over, every purple barge,
In purple shadow on the seas;
—In sweeps of silver outward rolled,
Till points of pearl upon the marge
Set sail for the Hesperides.

Midway the Sirens' Islands mark
The blue and glassy wave that flows
And ebbs within their cavern-line;
Lying all cool and lovely-dark
Against the cloudless West that glows
Through depths of crimson crystalline.

But the black hull is closer moored
Against the white shore, motionless;
All round, the opal flood of light,

Beneath the great black shape obscured,
Quivers intenser ;—is not this
The very gate of Heaven in sight ?

Not yet, not yet ! Another day.—
O, faithful hearts, take this for sign,
That as upon your agony,
With unmoved faces on their way,
Shine through the sunset the divine
Lights of Italia's shore and sea,—

Some day, hereafter, ye shall gaze
On them through other eyes than these
Of dry despair ;—and happy tears
Suddenly break forth—" Are the days
Ended indeed ? The skies and seas
Are passing. Past with all the years."

. . . . . .

The night has fallen suddenly ;
A wind comes sighing from the seas ;
And they are passed beyond our sight.
And none Nicotera shall see
Henceforth, though he were not with these,
He who is shut from life and light.

For he who was their Chief and First,
Shall suffer chief and first of all.
Dark caverns of captivity

In many an isle they hold; and worst
Of any, rumour can recall,
Is Favignana's out at sea.

They say Tiberius hollowed it,
The year that Christ from Calvary
Looked down, and said "Forgive them, Lord."
It lieth under water, lit
By such faint daylight shadowy
As down four hundred steps is poured;

Down in the heart of naked rock,
Below the seas that evermore
Sound through the dank and oozing walls;
The chains are rusted in the lock,
And on the rotten crusted floor
The centipede and scorpion crawls.

This legend on the tower above
Is carved: "*Si entra vivo, e*
Si esce morto." But Death waits:
And here Nicotera, for love
Of Italy, through night and day
Endures alone, and expiates.

O Master of the mighty hand!
Who sealest sentence with a kiss,
So that thy doomsmen's hearts grow light,—

Is the word true? Shall the faith stand?
Is the work worth such woe as this?
Can the day recompense the night?

Thou sendeth forth, and dost not spare,
Thy best to meet the tyrant's worst;
Thou sowest lives for Seed of Life.
O starry-stern through all despair,
Straight on thy course as at the first,
Where is *thine* anguish in this strife?

The live pain burneth like a lamp
Within thy dark eyes passionate,
It burneth to the soul away:
It saith, "To me the dungeon-damp,
The last farewell, the felon's fate,
Were nothing:—I know more, and stay.

"Facing the foreseen doom ye know,
Through flesh and soul's extremity,
Fight on, and keep your hearts alive!
I have gone through where ye must go,
I have seen past the agony,
I behold God in Heaven, and strive."

SUNRISE ON MONTE ROSA.

From "A Midsummer Day's Dream."

. . . THE light spread fast,
The sky was growing radiant. Now drew nigh
The hour supreme of all the earth, that brings
Once every day the marriage of the Sun
With Monte Rosa; and of all the year
This was the day supreme. The earth lay still
And waited in a deep and dewy calm:
The bloom of all the year was at its full.

The glorious mountain stands white as a bride,
Alone, above. The lesser mountain lights
Stand for a hundred miles from east to west
Unkindled yet. Unnumbered shimmering ways
Melting from moonlight into ashen grey,
Mark the mysterious kingdom of the snow;
The upper world, with all its territories,
Stretches itself in revelation clear
At this pale hour. Suddenly quivers up
A flame in the East. The white side thrills and heaves
In a wave of gold, as if a chord had struck
Of a vast music, and we scarce can tell
If we see or hear, so fast the glory rolls
In the great rush of the angel of the light.
Whiter and whiter shine th' immortal fronts
Before the coming touch, till all at once
The colour and the radiance break on them,

And lift them into unapproachèd heaven,
Lying aloft there in their crimson dream;
While sweeping giant shadows to the West
In violet darkness go before the fire.

Slowly it comes—it comes! The beacon-fires
Draw towards the feet of the Mount marvellous,
A change begins to flutter over her,
The Flower of the World unfolded waits to know
The mightier Monarch, and the Master's rod
Omnipotent, and all her pride grows pale.
Through all the silvery spaces in the highest,
Of the supreme and solitary shape,
A murmurous movement like a child asleep
Rises and falls, until our own hearts beat.
Hush now! she stirs,—she has felt the wings afar
Sweep through the sapphire silence of the skies:
The awfulness of a great change comes close.
And now one wan swift shudder visibly
Runs over her, and leaves her still more white.
There is a moment that we dare not see.
Then we look up, and lo! the glory in heaven!
One reddening wave of utter loveliness
Drowns all her pearly light in overflow;
And glowing through the still suspended depths,
The lamp of roses, the celestial face
Seems lighted from the passionate heart within;
Till all the intense blue of the heavens beyond
Seems to burn from her, set a sovereign there,
With the resurrection kiss upon her brow.
O Rose of God, fade not, nor float away!
Crowned by thy conqueror, rule and reign the lands
That blossom from the rivers of thy breast!

CIRCE.

THE sun drops luridly into the west;
Darkness has raised her arms to draw him down
Before the time, not waiting as of wont
Till he has come to her behind the sea;
And the smooth waves grow sullen in the gloom
And wear their threatening purple; more and more
The plain of waters sways and seems to rise
Convexly from its level of the shores;
And low dull thunder rolls along the beach:
There will be storm at last, storm, glorious storm.

O welcome, welcome, though it rend my bowers,
Scattering my blossomed roses like the dust,
Splitting the shrieking branches, tossing down
My riotous vines with their young half-tinged grapes
Like small round amethysts or beryls strung
Tumultuously in clusters, though it sate
Its ravenous spite among my goodliest pines
Standing there round and still against the sky
That makes blue lakes between their sombre tufts,
Or harry from my silvery olive slopes
Some hoary king whose gnarled fantastic limbs
Wear crooked armour of a thousand years;
Though it will hurl high on my flowery shores
The hostile wave that rives at the poor sward
And drags it down the slants, that swirls its foam

Over my terraces, shakes their firm blocks
Of great bright marbles into tumbled heaps,
And makes my pleached and mossy labyrinths,
Where the small odorous blossoms grow like stars
Strewn in the milky way, a briny marsh.
What matter? let it come and bring me change,
Breaking the sickly sweet monotony.

I am too weary of this long bright calm;
Always the same blue sky, always the sea
The same blue perfect likeness of the sky,
One rose to match the other that has waned,
To-morrow's dawn the twin of yesterday's;
And every night the ceaseless cricket's chirp
The same long joy, and the late strain of birds
Repeats their strain of all the even month;
And changelessly the petty plashing surfs
Bubble their chiming burden round the stones;
Dusk after dusk brings the same languid trance
Upon the shadowy hills, and in the fields,
The waves of fireflies come and go the same,
Making the very flash of light and stir
Vex one like dronings of the spinning wheel.

Give me some change. Must life be only sweet,
All honey-pap as babes would have their food?
And, if my heart must always be adrowse
In a hush of stagnant sunshine, give me then
Something outside me stirring; let the storm
Break up the sluggish beauty, let it fall
Beaten below the feet of passionate winds,
And then to-morrow waken jubilant

In a new birth : let me see subtle joy
Of anguish and of hopes, of change and growth.

What fate is mine who, far apart from pains
And fears and turmoils of the cross-grained world,
Dwell, like a lonely god, in a charmed isle
Where I am first and only, and, like one
Who should love poisonous savours more than mead.
Long for a tempest on me and grow sick
Of resting, and divine free carelessness !
Oh me, I am a woman, not a god ;
Yea, those who tend me even are more than I,
My nymphs who have the souls of flowers and birds
Singing and blossoming immortally.

Ah me ! these love a day and laugh again,
And loving, laughing, find a full content ;
But I know nought of peace, and have not loved.

. . .

Where is my love ? Does some one cry for me,
Not knowing whom he calls ? does his soul cry
For mine to grow beside it, grow in it ?
Does he beseech the gods to give him me,
The unknown rare woman by whose side
No other woman, thrice as beautiful,
Should once seem fair to him ; to whose voice heard
In any common tones no sweeter sound
Of love made melody on silver lutes,
Or singing like Apollo's when the gods
Grow pale with happy listening, might be peered

For making music to him; whom once found
There will be no more seeking anything?

Oh love, oh love, oh love, art not yet come
Out of the waiting shadows into life?
Art not yet come after so many years
That I have longed for thee? Come! I am here.

Not yet. For surely I should feel a sound
Of his far answering, if now in the world
He sought me who will seek me—Oh ye gods
Will he not seek me? Is it all a dream?
Will there be never never such a man?
Will there be only these, these bestial things
Who wallow in my styes, or mop or mow
Among the trees, or munch in pens and byres,
Or snarl and filch behind their wattled coops;
These things that had believed that they were men?

Nay, but he *will* come. Why am I so fair,
And marvellously minded, and with sight
Which flashes suddenly on hidden things,
As the gods see who do not need to look?
Why wear I in my eyes that stronger power
Than basilisks, whose gaze can only kill,
To draw men's souls to me to live or die
As I would have them? why am I given pride
Which yet longs to be broken, and this scorn
Cruel and vengeful for the lesser men
Who meet the smiles I waste for lack of him,
And grow too glad? why am I who I am,
But for the sake of him whom fate will send

One day to be my master utterly,
That he should take me, the desire of all,
Whom only he in all the world could bow to him?
Oh sunlike glory of pale glittering hairs,
Bright as the filmy wires my weavers take
To make me golden gauzes; oh deep eyes,
Darker and softer than the bluest dusk
Of August violets, darker and deep
Like crystal fathomless lakes in summer noons;
Oh sad sweet longing smile; oh lips that tempt
My very self to kisses; oh round cheeks,
Tenderly radiant with the even flush
Of pale smoothed coral; perfect lovely face
Answering my gaze from out this fleckless pool;
Wonder of glossy shoulders, chiselled limbs;
Should I be so your lover as I am,
Drinking an exquisite joy to watch you thus
In all a hundred changes through the day,
But that I love you for him till he comes,
But that my beauty means his loving it?

Oh, look! a speck on this side of the sun,
Coming—yes, coming with the rising wind
That frays the darkening cloud-wrack on the verge
And in a little while will leap abroad,
Spattering the skies with rushing blacknesses,
Dashing the hissing mountainous waves at the stars.
'Twill drive me that black speck a shuddering hulk
Caught in the buffeting waves, dashed impotent
From ridge to ridge, will drive it in the night
With that dull jarring crash upon the beach,
And the cries for help, and the cries of fear and hope.

And then to-morrow they will thoughtfully,
With grave low voices, count their perils up,
And thank the gods for having let them live,
And tell of wives and mothers in their homes,
And children, who would have such loss in them
That they must weep, and may be I weep too,
Of fancy of the weepings had they died.
And the next morrow they will feel their ease
And sigh with sleek content, or laugh elate,
Tasting delights of rest and revelling,
Music and perfumes, joyance for the eyes
Of rosy faces and luxurious pomps,
The savour of the banquet and the glow
And fragrance of the wine cup; and they'll talk
How good it is to house in palaces
Out of the storms and struggles, and what luck
Strewed their good ship on our accessless coast.
Then the next day the beast in them will wake,
And one will strike and bicker, and one swell
With puffed up greatness, and one gibe and strut
In apish pranks, and one will line his sleeve
With pilfered booties, and one snatch the gems
Out of the carven goblets as they pass,
One will grow mad with fever of the wine,
And one will sluggishly besot himself,
And one be lewd, and one be gluttonous;
And I shall sickly look, and loathe them all.

Oh my rare cup! my pure and crystal cup,
With not one speck of colour to make false
The passing lights, or flaw to make them swerve!
My cup of Truth! How the lost fools will laugh
And thank me for my boon, as if I gave

Some momentary flash of the god's joy,
To drink where I have drunk and touch the touch,
Of my lips with their own! Aye, let them touch.

Too cruel am I? And the silly beasts,
Crowding around me when I pass their way,
Glower on me and, although they love me still,
(With their poor sorts of love such as they could,)
Call wrath and vengeance to their humid eyes
To scare me into mercy, or creep near
With piteous fawnings, supplicating bleats.
Too cruel? Did I choose them what they are?
Or change them from themselves by poisonous charms?
But any draught, pure water, natural wine,
Out of my cup, revealed them to themselves
And to each other? Change? there was no change;
Only disguise gone from them unawares:
And had there been one right true man of them
He would have drunk the draught as I had drunk,
And stood unchanged, and looked me in the eyes,
Abashing me before him. But these things——
Why, which of them has even shown the kind
Of some one nobler beast? Pah, yapping wolves
And pitiless stealthy wild-cats, curs and apes
And gorging swine and stinking venomous snakes
All false and ravenous and sensual brutes
That shame the earth that bore them, these they are.

Lo! lo! the shivering blueness darting forth
On half the heavens, and the forked thin fire
Strikes to the seas: and hark, the sudden voice

That rushes through the trees before the storm,
And shuddering the branches. Yet the sky
Is blue against them still, and early stars
Glimmer above the pine-tops ; and the air
Clings faint and motionless around me here.

Another burst of flame—and the black speck
Shows in the glare, lashed onwards. It were well
I bade make ready for our guests to-night.

IN A DAY.

EVENING.

SCENE II. *The banquet hall lighted up. Soft music playing without. A bed placed in an alcove among flowers.*

[*Enter* MYRON, OLYMNIOS, RUFUS, LYSIS, *and others.*]

Myr. Move me that jasmine further from the bed:
The perfume's sweetness coming faint through air.
That's well. And shut the nearest casement close:
The breeze is almost chill. Throw that one wide:
Let waning stars peep at their mimics here.
Now, Rufus, art thou ready?
Ruf. 'Tis art thou?
Myr. Give me the cup, good Lysis. Pure wine first.
I drink to the Good Genius [*drinks*]—whom, perchance,
I shall know presently by some nearer name.
Now, Lysis, that blent wine whose name is Sleep. [*Drinks.*]
[*To Rufus*] So, thou hast seen me drink, and knowest what draught,
Who saw'st it mixed; no need methinks to watch.
Go, prithee, try again my vintage wine:
I doubt thou will not ask to taste *this* brew.
Ruf. No, faith! my thirst can wait a wholesomer tap.
I'm sorry for thee too.
Myr. Well, go, my man;
Thou canst come by-and-by and see 'twas sure.

[*Exeunt all but Myron, Olymnios, and Lysis.*

Now quick, boy; fetch Klydone [*Exit Lysis.*] 'Tis most strange
How death, that is of all we know most sure,
Of all we know seems most impossible.
I shall not live an hour; my mind grants that,
But grants it as a stage of argument,
Gives it but such belief as when, being told
'So many fathomless miles to reach that star?'
We learn the count unquestioning it for true,
But cannot shape conception of its reach.
I cannot, quick life still within my veins,
I cannot feel a faith that, presently,
My cold oblivious body shall lie there,
Void of the soul, an ended nothingness.

Olymn. Thou art too young, and death unnatural.

Myr. Klydone thinks all death unnatural.

Olymn. If nature stood for perfectness, it were.
And therein is the better after-hope:
For perfectness must be, since we conceive it,
And, not being here, 'tis in some second life.

Myr. I'll think my soul shall, like the sunward swallows,
Having known but summer here, renew it there.
Klydone comes not.

Olymn. That's for want of wings.

Myr. I would she had them, to flee hence and rest;
'Tis a wild long journey. Ah, poor child, poor child!
May the gods send her happy.

Olymn. If they will
Pray rather they may send her as is best.

Myr. Let her not brood upon my death too much.
And most of all persuade her from remorse;
Tell her 'twas destined, had she never spoken;
Hush her from her own blame till, by-and-by;

It takes the strangeness of unworded thoughts
That fade like bodily ghosts beyond our ken.
Olymn. No, Myron. Self-blame's a shrewd counsellor;
I will not help Klydone from that good.
Myr. She is such a woman as some griefs could kill.
Olymn. Better to die by an ennobling grief
Than to live cheerful in too low content.
Myr. But spare her; if it be but for my sake.
Olymn. Whom dost thou ask? I spare not nor chastise;
That's God's to do, who makes our self his means:
Her sorrowing or her comfort lie in him.

Enter LYSIS.

Lys. Klydone, sir, Klydone—[*Stops*].
Myr. Comes she not?
Tell her to make more speed, for I grow heavy.
Lys. She comes; she bade them carry her; she's half dead.
Myr. I am awake, I think. Say it again,
Half dead?
Lys. She took the poison at due time,
She said 'twas at due time by thine own count,
She said thou shouldst have called her in an hour
And she was ready then, but 'twas too long,
More than an hour, and as she must go first,
That did but mean to follow thee afterwards.
Olymn. Well, 'tis her right.
Myr. Is it a message, boy?
Lys. She said it by gasps; then bade me, if she died,
Tell it thee for her and thou'dst know, and pardon.
She is coming.
Myr. She go first! Klydone die!
Olymnios, hast thou heard?

Olymn. I blame her not;
Nor weep her going with thee. 'Tis the best.
Myr. I would have had her live: she hated death.
But we go hand and hand, husband and wife.
Lysis, go bid them hasten, lest she sleep,
Or I, past waking, ere she come to me.

Enter SERVANTS *carrying* KLYDONE *on a couch.*

A Servant. 'Tis over. She still breathed a minute since;
But now 'tis over.
2nd. Servant. 'Twas but just 'Too soon!'
As if she sighed in sleep; then only breathed,
And now 'tis over.
Myr. Oh how fair she lies!
She should have kept that smile to look on me.
Sweet, canst thou see me still? How fair she is!
Smile on Klydone, death has wedded us.
Wife, will thou love me there, whither we go?
[*Exit Olymnios.*
Lys. Master, she stirred.
Myr. 'Twas but my breath, my boy,
That moved that straying gossamer of her hair.
[*To the servants.*] Come, lift her gently, lay her on the bed.
So.
Olymn. [*Without.*] Both! oh, both!
A Servant. Hark! 'Twas a fall. Go see.
[*Exuent some servants.*
Myr. Where is Olymnios?

Re-enter A SERVANT.

What's the noise we heard?
Serv. Olymnios, master.
Myr. Yes?
Serv. He died, and fell.

Myr. When sorrow swells those iron-pent hearts they break.
Go, all of you. Keep stillness, wake me not.
I have room beside thee, love. [*Lies down on the bed.*]
Go now, my friends.
Lysis; not thou. Sit where I do not see thee,
Send hence the music, and thou, sing me asleep.
Is it moonlight yet?
Lys. Yes.
Myr. Throw those curtains back,
Put out those lights. Now sing until I sleep.
[*Exeunt servants.*
No dirges, boy; that song Klydone loved,
Philomel and the aloe flower, sing that.
Lys. [*sings.*]
Joy that's half too keen, and true,
Makes us tears.
Oh! the sweetness of the tears!
If such joy at hand appears,
Snatch it, give thine all for it:
Joy that is so exquisite,
Lost, comes not new.
(One blossom for a hundred years.)

Grief that's fond, and dies not soon,
Makes delight.
Oh! the pain of the delight!
If thy grief be Love's aright,
Tend it close and let it grow:
Grief so tender not to know
Loses Love's boon.
(Sweet Philomel sings all the night.)
Myr. [drowsily.] Fair dreams, Klydone. Waken me at dawn. [*Sleeps.*

THE RIVULET.

Oh, clear smooth rivulet, creeping through our bridge
With backward waves that cling around the shore,
And is thy world beyond the dim blue ridge
More dear than this, or does it need thee more?
Oh, lingering stream, upon thy ceaseless way
Glide to to-morrow; yet 'tis fair to-day:
Beyond the hills and haze to-morrows hide;
To-day is fair; glide lingering, ceaseless tide.

"English Stornelli."

THE FLOWING TIDE.

THE slow green wave comes curling from the bay
And leaps in spray along the sunny marge,
And steals a little more and more away,
And drowns the dulse, and lifts the stranded barge.
Leave me, strong tide, my smooth and yellow shore;
But the clear waters deepen more and more:
Leave me my pathway of the sands, strong tide;
Yet are the waves more fair than all they hide.

"English Stornelli."

THE FLOWERS TO COME.

THE drift is in the hollow of the hill,
  Yet primrose leaves uncurl beneath the hedge;
Frosts pierce the dawn, and the north wind blows chill,
  Yet snowdrop spikelets rim the garden edge.
Dear plants that will make bud in coming spring,
Ye were not for one only blossoming:
  More than one blossoming for all fair flowers;
  And God keeps mine till spring is somewhere ours.

"English Stornelli."

REST.

In green old gardens, hidden away
From sight of revel and sound of strife,
Where the bird may sing out his soul ere he dies,
Nor fears for the night, so he lives his day;
Where the high red walls, which are growing gray
With their lichen and moss embroideries,
Seem sadly and sternly to shut out Life,
Because it is often as sad as they;

Where even the bee has time to glide
(Gathering gaily his honeyed store)
Right to the heart of the old-world flowers,—
China-asters and purple stocks,
Dahlias and tall red hollyhocks,
Laburnums raining their golden showers,
Columbines prim of the folded core,
And lupins, and larkspur, and 'London pride;'—

Where the heron is waiting amongst the reeds,
Grown tame in the silence that reigns around,
Broken only, but now and then,
By shy woodpecker or noisy jay,
By the far-off watch-dog's muffled bay;
But where never the purposeless laughter of men,
Or the seething city's murmurous sound
Will float up under the river-weeds.

Here may I live what life I please,
  Married and buried out of sight,—
    Married to Pleasure, and buried to Pain,—
Hidden away amongst scenes like these,
Under the fans of the chestnut trees;
    Living my child-life over again,
  With a fuller hope of a fuller delight,
Blithe as the birds and wise as the bees.

In green old gardens, hidden away
  From sight of revel and sound of strife,—
    Here have I leisure to breathe and move,
And to do my work in a nobler way;
To sing my songs, and to say my say;
    To dream my dreams, and to love my love;
  To hold my faith, and to live my life,
Making the most of its shadowy day.

FORBIDDEN LOVE.

Oh, love! thou that shelt'rest some
'Neath thy wings, so white and warm,
Wherefore on a bat-like wing
All disguisèd did'st thou come
In so terrible a form?
As a dark forbidden thing,
As a demon of the air—
As a sorrow and a sin,
Wherefore cam'st thou thus to me,
As a tempter and a snare?
When the heart that beats within
This, my bosom, warm'd to thee,
Was it from a love of sinning,—
From a fatal love of wrong,
From a wish to shun the light?
Nay! I swear at the beginning
Had'st thou sung an angel's song,—
Had this wrong thing been the right,
Thou had'st seem'd as worth the winning,
And with will as firm and strong
I had lov'd with all my might.

SONG OF THE WATER-NIXIES.

By the ripple, ripple of the shallow sea,
By the rocky sea,
By the hollow sea,
We have built a giant windmill, with its long arms free,
And it grinds, that we
May not hungry be.
With a rumble and a roar, sounding all along the shore,
We should vanish and should perish if our wheel were heard no more.

Little hopes of fisher-maidens in the far-off town,
In our wheel go down,
Evermore go down,
For the fisher lads that hold them in the deep sea drown;
By our grinding drown,
For our pleasures drown.
Rend the garment from the soul; let it go, we care not where;
What do mortals want with spirit? 'Tis the bodies that are fair.

Out beyond the green horizon lurks the vengeful day,
Lurks the fateful day,
Lurks the hateful day,
When the winds shall cease to help us in our shark-like play,

When our calm cold sway
Shall have passed away,
When the wreckers and the wrecked both at peace shall be,—
When the threat shall be fulfilled, and there be no more sea.

GROWTH.

I.

A LONELY rock uprose above the sea,
The coral insects fretting at its base;
And no man came unto its loneliness,
The very storm-birds shunned its evil case:
Only the ocean beat upon its breast,
Only the ocean gave it close embrace.

II.

An island was upheaved towards the skies,
A central fire within its heart had burst;
The rock became a mountain, stern and strong,
Only the desolation showed at first;
A stray bird dropped a seed that fructified,
No longer reigned the barrenness accursed.

III.

A little world stood out among the seas,
With singing brooks and many a fragrant wood,
Where lovers heard again their story sweet,
And truth grew fair, more fully understood.
The tender flowers o'ergrew the chasms deep,
And God looked down, and saw that it was good.

SORROW.

If trampled grass gives perfume; if the bowl
Must be well broken ere the wine can flow;
From the abysses of this storm-tossed soul,
From this my destiny's last mortal blow,
From sobs, and sighs, and agonies of tears,
From tortured life, and happiness forborne,
The utter ruin of my youth's lost years,
And from the bitter present's strife forlorn,
The future's terror and the past's despair;
And from this crushed and grief-wrung heart I dare
To call on thee, O God! Let others bring
Their love, obedience, faith, as offering:
I lay my sorrows prostrate at thy feet,
Avenging God! to Thee bruised flowers are sweet.

ENDURANCE.

WILD heart, be still! From yon lone mount, a star
Looks singly forth on the dark world. Art thou
Less brave? To thee thy fears and sorrows are
As night to yon bright orb; yet is its brow
Radiant and calm, as when amid the joy
Of the young earth its light flashed forth from God!
Can summer suns, or gentle moons alloy
The immemorial woe to which art vowed,
O cypress-tree? Yet dost thou sternly bear
Thy mournful doom, and with a brave despair
Droop'st not, albeit no smiles of vernal spring
To thy funereal crown new light can bring.
Lo! these bear up 'gainst Fate a steadfast war;
Am I less noble than the tree or star?

"PEACE TO THE ODALISQUE"

I.

Peace to the odalisque, the facile slave,
Whose unrespective love rewards the brave,
Or cherishes the coward; she who yields
Her lord the fief of waste, uncultured fields
To fester in non-using; she whose hour
Is measured by her beauty's transient flower;
Who lives in man, as he in God, and dies
His parasite, who shuts her from the skies.
Graceful ephemera! Fair morning dream
Of the young world! In vain would women's hearts,
In love with sacrifice, withstand the stream
Of human progress; other spheres, new parts
Await them. God be with them in their quest—
Our brave, sad working-women of the West.

II.

PEACE to the odalisque, whose morning glory
Is vanishing, to live alone in story;
Firm in her place, a dull-robed figure stands,
With wistful eyes, and earnest grappling hands:
The working-woman, she whose soul and brain—
Her tardy right—are bought with honest pain.
Oh woman! sacrifice may still be thine—
More fruitful than the souls ye did resign
To sated masters; from your lives, so real,
Will shape itself a pure and high ideal,
That ye will seek with sad, wide-open eyes,
Till, finding nowhere, baffled love shall rise
To higher planes, where passion may look pale,
But charity's white light shall never fail.

EVOLUTION.

Hunger that strivest in the restless arms
  Of the sea-flower, that drivest rooted things
  To break their moorings, that unfoldest wings
In creatures to be rapt above thy harms;
Hunger, of whom the hungry-seeming waves
  Were the first ministers, till, free to range,
  Thou mad'st the Universe thy park and grange,
What is it thine insatiate heart still craves?

Sacred disquietude, divine unrest!
  Maker of all that breathes the breath of life,
No unthrift greed spurs thine unflagging zest,
  No lust self-slaying hounds thee to the strife;
Thou art the Unknown God on whom we wait:
Thy path the course of our unfolded fate.

TO NATURE.

Dread force, in whom of old we loved to see
A nursing mother, clothing with her life
The seeds of Love divine,—with what sore strife
We hold or yield our thoughts of Love and thee!
Thou art not 'calm,' but restless as the ocean,
Filling with aimless toil the endless years—
Stumbling on thought and throwing off the spheres,
Churning the Universe with mindless motion.

Dull fount of joy, unhallowed source of tears,
Cold motor of our fervid faith and song,
Dead, but engendering life, love, pangs, and fears,
Thou crownedst thy wild work with foulest wrong
When first thou lightedst on a seeming goal
And darkly blundered on man's suffering soul.

WHEN THE BROW OF JUNE.

When the brow of June is crowned by the rose,
And the air is fain and faint with her breath,
Then the Earth hath rest from her long birth-throes;—

The Earth hath rest and forgetteth her woes
As she watcheth the cradle of Love and Death,
When the brow of June is crowned by the rose.

O Love and Death who are counted for foes,
She sees you twins of one mind and faith—
The Earth at rest from her long birth-throes.

You are twins to the mother who sees and knows;
(Let them strive and thrive together, she saith),—
When the brow of June is crowned by the rose,

They strive, and Love his brother outgrows,
But for strength and beauty he travaileth
On the Earth at rest from her long birth-throes.

And still when his passionate heart o'erflows
Death winds about him a bridal wreath,—
As the brow of June is crowned by the rose!

So the bands of Death true lovers enclose,
  For Love and Death are as Sword and Sheath,
When the Earth hath rest from her long birth-throes.

They are Sword and Sheath, they are Life and its Shows
  Which lovers have grace to see beneath,
When the brow of June is crowned by the rose
And the Earth hath rest from her long birth-throes.

A SONG OF WINTER.

Barbed blossom of the guarded gorse,
I love thee where I see thee shine:
Thou sweetener of our common-ways,
And brightener of our wintry days.

Flower of the gorse, the rose is dead,
Thou art undying, O be mine!
Be mine with all thy thorns, and prest
Close on a heart that asks not rest.

I pluck thee and thy stigma set
Upon my breast and on my brow,
Blow, buds, and plenish so my wreath
That none may know the wounds beneath.

O crown of thorn that seemest of gold,
No festal coronal art thou;
Thy honeyed blossoms are but hives
That guard the growth of wingëd lives.

I saw thee in the time of flowers
As sunshine spilled upon the land,
Or burning bushes all ablaze
With sacred fire; but went my ways;

I went my ways, and as I went
  Plucked kindlier blooms on either hand;
Now of those blooms so passing sweet
None lives to stay my passing feet.

And still thy lamp upon the hill
  Feeds on the autumn's dying sigh,
And from thy midst comes murmuring
A music sweeter than in spring.

Barbed blossoms of the guarded gorse,
  Be mine to wear until I die,
And mine the wounds of love which still
Bear witness to his human will.

MACKENZIE'S FAREWELL.

WRITTEN FOR A LAMENT SO-NAMED.

SOFT lie the mist-wreaths, the hill-tops adorning,
And sweetly the autumn wind sighs o'er the muir,
But, ochone! to my soul all nature is mourning,
And scarce can my spirit her anguish endure.
Wearily, wearily, wandering ever,
Drearily, drearily, morning and e'en;
Parting for aye, returning, ah! never
To thee, my loved hame, where sae lang I hae been.

Deep in the corrie the wild dear is belling,
And answering echoes his challenge return;
Wild screams the earn o'er her aerial dwelling,
Where the dark crags tower heavenward, gloomy and stern.
Never, oh! nevermore roaming sae blithe and free,
Recking of naught save the joys of to-day;
Mony a woe to bear, mony an ill to dree,
Wearily henceforth I tread my lorn way.

Charlie, my lord and king! where art thou lying?
Stretch'd in some bothy, on rude heather bed,
Or 'fore thy foes like a hunted stag flying;
No rest on earth for that young royal head!

Could I but ken thee safe, lichten'd my woe would be,
Lichten'd the burden that scarce I can bear;
Now, e'en the thought of thee adds to mine agony,
And to the wild winds I cry my despair.

Shades of my forefathers! gather and hearken
To this my lament as it floats on the gale,
While even's deep shadows the fair landscape darken,
And I take the last look of my ain native vale.
Rise, oh, ye dead! from each cold earthy pillow;
Rise, for none else bids a farewell to me;
Ere morn riseth bright, on the wild storm-toss'd billow,
The last of your race a lone exile to be.

PRAYER.

Now, whilst the solemn hand of night has laid
A hush upon the tumult of the street,
And colours blend, and forms begin to fade,
Leaving the unity of life complete,
I stand environed by the lime-trees' shade,
Whose boughs are tremulous with blossoms sweet,
And, like the murmur of a restless sea,
The voice of the great city floats to me.

I will not fret me that angelic Peace
Folds only in her wings the starry sky;
Nor blame the restful night, who brings release
To much hard toil, to many a mourner's sigh,
Because she does not bid all labour cease,
Nor lay her kiss on every wakeful eye,
I will not dare to criticise God's ways,
But raise me to their heights by prayer and praise.

At least to-night, for the still Summer air,
Infiltrate with the breath of many a star,
Hangs rapt as in an ecstasy of prayer,
All sense of pain were powerless to mar,
And merest stones, and homes of beauty bare,
Stand touched by radiance flowing from afar,
Whilst the large voice of Nature seems to say,
In tones like organ-throbbing, "Let us pray."

I would be brave to harmonise my soul
Unto this music; to crush out the heat
Of partial life that has me in control,
And blends the stroke of wings with trudge of feet;
To give awhile this fragment to the Whole,
That so it may be cleansed of dust and heat,
And contemplating the eternal cause,
Master the hidden beauty of His Laws.

I will not throw me prostrate on my knee,
Nor shut out with my hands the heaven's face;
Nor school to whine or whimper abjectly,
The voice which is man's special gift of grace;
I will not dwarf the spirit God gave free,
Nor dare my mental statue to debase;
Rather I'd raise me to my fullest height,
And strain with eager eyes towards the Home of Light.

Wide—let me fling the closëd portals wide;
And fearless thrust me out beyond the vail
That with its wrappings would my spirit hide,
And cloak my being in a twilight pale;
And let me dash the mask of self aside,
And dare the barriers of sense to scale,
Raising the burden of my finite share
Unto the Infinite, on wings of prayer.

Because I fully claim to take my share
In human suffering and toil and smart;
Because there is no weight of human care
From which I choose to hold myself apart;

No human hand to touch I would forbear;
No human frailty shut out from my heart;
Because the hardship of the fight is known,
Because this suffering manhood is mine own.

I can afford to quench each bitter cry,
To be quite generous, and rest from pain;
And as the rapture wings my soul on high,
To have no thought of solace or of gain,
To trouble heaven with no suppliant's sigh,
But lose me in the universal strain,
Seeking his presence not to beg, but give
My tribute unto him thro' whom I live.

For prayer is not some preternatural charm
Unto the general scheme of order strange;
No spell to stay the compensating arm,
Nor the straight course of destiny to change;
Prayer is the soul's ascension beyond harm,
Where it may gain a universal range;
And having tasted union with its Source,
May flow, all struck with splendour, on its course.

NEW YEAR'S EVE. MIDNIGHT.

DEAD. The dead year is lying at my feet,
In this strange hour the past and future meet;
There is no present; no land in the vast sea;
Appalled, I stand here in Eternity.

Darkness upon me. On my soul it weighs;
The gloom that has crushed out the life of days
That once knew light, has crept into my heart;
I have not strength to bid it thence depart.

Oh, what is Time? and what is Life, the fire
That thrills my pulses with its large desire?
Since at each step I rend a fragment of my soul,
And growth means dying, whither is the goal?

The old, old question! yet I do not shrink
From bitter truths; I do not fear to drink
Even to the dregs the cup that tears may fill;
I'd know God's truth, though it were human ill;

I have cast down the idols in my mind
Which sought to comfort me for being blind;
I need no pleasant lie to cheat the night,
I need God's Truth, that I may walk aright

That, and that only! with unflinching eyes
I would tear through the secret of the skies;
Smile on, ye stars; in me there is a might
Which dares to scale your large empyreal height.

Yet—yet—how shall it be? Time sweeps me on,
And what one day I hold, the next is gone;
The very Heavens are changed! the face they wore,
A moment back, is lost to come no more.

My soul along the restless current drifts,
And to its sight the source of radiance shifts;
Wildly I strive some gleam of truth to save,
And cry, 'God help me!' battling with the wave.

God help me? Well I know the prayer is vain,
Altho' it rush up to my lips again;
I know His help was given with the Breath,
That leads me thus to struggle against death.

No further help. No help beyond the soul,
The fragment of Himself I hold in my control;
From heaven, no stronger aid to lead me through the fight:
In Heaven, no higher aim to bind me to the Right.

Thus stand I on the brink of this new year,
Darkness upon me—not the work of fear.
Powerless I know to check the river's sweep,
Powerful alone my own soul's truth to keep.

SONG.

As the inhastening tide doth roll,
Dear and desired, upon the whole
Long shining strand, and floods the caves,
Your love comes filling with happy waves
The open sea-shore of my soul.

But inland from the seaward spaces,
None knows, not even you, the places
Brimmed, at your coming, out of sight,
—The little solitudes of delight
This tide constrains in dim embraces.

You see the happy shore, wave-rimmed,
But know not of the quiet dimmed
Rivers your coming floods and fills,
The little pools 'mid happier hills,
My silent rivulets, over-brimmed.

What, I have secrets from you? Yes.
But O my Sea, your love doth press
And reach in further than you know,
And fill all these ; and when you go,
There's loneliness in loneliness.

THOUGHTS IN SEPARATION.

We never meet; yet we meet day by day
Upon those hills of life, dim and immense,
The good we love, and sleep, our innocence.
O hills of life, high hills! and, higher than they,

Our guardian spirits meet at prayer and play.
Beyond pain, joy, and hope, and long suspense,
Above the summits of our souls, far hence,
An angel meets an angel on the way.

Beyond all good I ever believed of thee
Or thou of me, these always love and live.
And, though I fail of thy ideal of me,

My angel falls not short. They greet each other;
Who knows, they may exchange the kiss we give,
Thou to thy crucifix, I to my mother.

RENOUNCEMENT.

I MUST not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
I shun the love that lurks in all delight—
The love of thee—and in the blue Heaven's height,
And in the dearest passage of a song.
Oh just beyond the sweetest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits hidden yet bright;
But it must never, never come in sight;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.

But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,
Must doff my will as raiment laid away,—
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

THE MODERN POET:

A SONG OF DERIVATIONS.

I come from nothing: but from where
Come the undying thoughts I bear?
Down through long links of death and birth
From the past poets of the earth.
My immortality is there.

I am like the blossom of an hour;
But long long vanished sun and shower
Awoke my breath in the young world's air.
I track the past back everywhere,
Through seed and flower, and seed and flower.

Or I am like a stream that flows
Full of the cold springs that arose
In morning lands, in distant hills;
And down the plain my channel fills
With melting of forgotten snows.

Voices I have not heard possessed
My own fresh songs; my thoughts are blessed
With relics of the far unknown;
And, mixed with memories not my own,
The sweet streams throng into my breast.

Before this life began to be,
The happy songs that wake in me
Woke long ago and far apart.
Heavily on this little heart
Presses this immortality

BUILDERS OF RUINS.

We build with strength the deep tower-wall
That shall be shattered thus and thus.
And fair and great are court and hall,
But how fair—this is not for us,
Who dimly feel the want of all.

We know, we know how all too bright
All hues of ours though dimmed through tears,
And how the marble gleams too white;—
We speak in unknown tongues; the years
Interpret everything aright.

They crown with weeds our pride of towers,
And warm our marble through with sun,
And break our pavements through with flowers;
With an Amen when all is done,
Knowing these perfect things of ours.

O days, we ponder, left alone,
Like children in their lonely hour,
And in our secrets keep your own,
As seeds the colour of the flower.
To-day they are not all unknown—

The stars that 'twixt their rise and fall,
Like relic-seers, shall one by one
Stand musing o'er our empty hall;
And setting moons shall brood upon
The frescoes of our inward wall.

And when some midsummer shall be,
Hither shall come some little one
(Dusty with bloom of flowers is he),
Sit on the ruin i' the late long sun,
And think, one foot upon his knee.

And where they wrought, these lives of ours,
So many worded, many souled,
A north-west wind will take the towers
And dark with colour, sunny and cold,
Will range alone among the flowers.

And here or there, at our desire,
The little clamorous owl shall sit
Through her still time; and we aspire
To make a law (and know not it)
Unto the life of a wild briar.

We have a purpose perfect, dear,
Though from our consciousness 'tis hidden.
Thou, Time to come, shalt make it clear,
Undoing our work; we are children chidden
With pity, and smiles of many a year.

Who shall allot the praise, and guess
What part is yours and what is ours?—
O years that certainly will bless
Our flowers with fruits, our seeds with flowers,
With ruin all our perfectness.

Be patient, Time, of our delays,
Too happy hopes, and wasted fears,
Our faithful ways, our wilful ways.
Solace our labours, O our seers,
The seasons, and our bards the days;

And make our pause and silence brim
With the shrill children's play, and sweets
Of those pathetic flowers and dim,
Of those eternal flowers my Keats,
Dying, felt growing over him.

SUNDAY—A CALM AT SEA.

Now the wild waters sway themselves to rest,
Soft, softly kissed,
And like a benediction o'er the sea
Broods the still mist.

Oh! Holy Spirit, keep a Sabbath here
In my wild breast;
Bending benignant from thy heavenly sphere,
Teach me to rest.

Too late repentant, I've no limpid depth
Where thou might'st lie,
Only the welter that the weary waves
Lift to the sky.

Only myself, of all thy beauteous world
Nothing is mine,
No deep reflection from belovèd lives,
No light divine.—

Ah! see that sparkle; see, the mists uproll
In noiseless flight!
For me the omen;—in my eventide
Shall there be light?

THE WIFE OF LOKI.

Cursed by the gods and crowned with shame,
Fell father of a direful brood,
Whose crimes have filled the heaven with flame
And drenched the earth with blood.

Loki, the guileful Loki, stands
Within a rocky mountain-gorge;
Chains gird his body, feet, and hands,
Wrought in no mortal forge.

Coiled on the rock, a mighty snake
Above him, day and night, is hung,
With dull malignant eyes awake,
And poison-dropping tongue.

Drop follows drop in ceaseless flow,
Each falling where the other fell,
To lay upon his blistered brow
The liquid fire of hell.

But lo, beside the howling wretch
A woman stands, devoid of dread,
And one pale arm is seen to stretch
Above his tortured head.

All through the day is lifted up,
  And all the weary night-time through,
One patient hand that holds a cup
  To catch the poison-dew.

Sometimes the venom overfills
  The cup, and she must pour it forth,
With Loki's curses then the hills
  Are rent from south to north.

But she in answer, only sighs,
  And lays her lips upon his face,
And, with love's anguish in her eyes,
  Resumes her constant place.

FAITH IN DOUBT.

I SOUGHT to keep the way of life—'twas hard;
Beneath me yawned the darkness, wide and deep,
I saw the blinding mists around me sweep,
And spectral forms of fear the pathway barred,
My footsteps to bewilder and retard.
No help was left, save on my knees to creep
Close to the crumbling edge and cling and weep,
With weary limbs, and hands all bruised and scarred.

For this, methought, was faith—with desperate trust
To grasp the worn-out relics of a creed:
Beneath the strain they shivered into dust.
I reeled and fell—oh where?—upon the breast
Of Love divine, and there, at peace indeed,
My soul in heavenly darkness lies at rest.

THE VALLEY OF REMORSE.

THERE goes a wandering soul in desert places;
(Good Lord, deliver!)
About its way, lie dumb, with livid faces,
Slain virtues and slain hopes in locked embraces;
(Good Lord, deliver!)
And drear black crags tower from unholy ground
Sheer upward in thick air,
Where breathes no prayer;
No wind is there,
No sound;
(Good Lord, deliver!)
And there is no way out, and round and round,
With haggard eye and dragged and staggering paces,
Through years that soul a ghastly circuit traces.
(Good Lord, deliver!)

The sun, all shorn of rays, with lurid fire
Blasts where its strikes: Doom's own red eye of ire:
And all night long is seen unhallowed shimmer,—
Half life, half mire,—
Of things made manifest that should be hid;
Yet Will is numb that should their play forbid;
And so they crowd and crawl in gloom and glimmer,
Loathed and unchid;
And lo that soul among them, moving dimmer,
(Good Lord, deliver!)

At the soul's back behold a burden yonder,
A monstrous thing of slime;
Two paces forth,—no more,—that Doomed may wander
For all its time,—
Two wretched paces from the accursed weight
Bound on by linkèd fate
In glittering cynic chain two steps behind it;
(Good Lord, deliver!)
Such steely bond between
Forbids it breath, save only to remind it
The Past has been,
The Past of sin.
(Good Lord, deliver!)

Ay! just where life is holiest—at the source
Of the soft, ruffled wings,—is chained the curse.
(Good Lord, deliver)
Those pinions, once all light and wide of feather,
That soared right loftily, see, clamped together;
And quivering life is gallèd at the spot,
Sore hurt and hot:
(Good Lord, deliver!)
Yet, chafes that soul rebellious at the tether?
Or, in vain swiftness seeks to flee the load?
Then heavier fall the blood-drops on the road:—
(Good Lord, deliver!)

The loathèd burden of unburied death
Flies fast as flies that Doomed, or drags as slow:
(Good Lord, deliver!)

Two paces forward ever may it go ;
No more ; the burden grimly followeth.
There is no freedom here,
Nor any cheer !
(Good Lord, deliver !)

Not lightened yet to skeleton, nor dried,
The load yields horror, horror yet beside ;
Fell fumes, half poison and half sustenance,
That hinder life, and hinder deathly trance,
Is there a chance ?
(Good Lord, deliver !)

. . . . . .

Three virgin forms came passing by but lately,
Treading the desert boldly and sedately,
Calling it 'beauteous earth,'
Who met this Doomed, and gazed upon it straightly ;--
(Good Lord, deliver !)
These saw no burden, so they praised the chain ;
Its treacherous glitter seemed some bauble worn
About the wingèd shoulders to adorn.
(Good Lord, deliver !)

They noted on the path no shocking stain,
So, as the soul made moan,
Knowing no whit of conflict nor of pain,
Deemed it most vain,
And answered in gay tone—
'Now heaven deliver thee,

Spirit alone !—
Why grievest thou when every bird is singing,
And glad white cloudlets high in ether winging
Brighten e'en sunshine? Hear the steeples ringing
With marriage mirth !
Behold life blest with love and holiday
While thou art stricken, bent, and wan to see ;
Good Lord, deliver thee ! '

All mutely points that soul beyond the chain
Two paces backward ; points in vain, in vain ;—
Who sees not, cannot aid.
Oh kind, unkindly virgin sympathy !
Oh blind, hell-deepening, heavenly mockery !
What though each maid
Had pitied had she seen ; not one could see,
Not one of three.
(Good Lord, deliver !)

They passed, and music with them. Then there came
Three little children, joying e'en the same,
Yet sweetlier still. They called the desert ' May.'
(Good Lord, deliver !)
" Come with us and play ;
Blue skies and meadows green are friends to-day ;
Spread thy good wings, that we may mount thereon
And seek of all the clouds the whitest one
To tiptoe on its top toward the sun ;
And prove whose sight is strongest !
And who can gaze the longest ;
Our little eyes are clear,—
Young, but so clear !

In each of thine there trembles half a tear!
Ah! fun!—
We see where thou canst see not; in the eye
Of the great golden sun that crowns the sky!'
(Good Lord, deliver!)

A mother and a father wandered by:
Hand locked in hand.—'This way the children went,'
Quoth he, 'on some enchanting mischief bent;
Behold, their little footprints thickly lie.'
'Bless them!' quoth she: then closer to his side
Drew shudderingly: 'An influence is here,
Here in the air; the sunlight seemeth drear,
Oh, lead me hence!' and he:
''Tis so; I see a form unmeet to see
Advancing painfully.
Oh fear!
Lest the sweet babies lingered near the spot,
For something foul doth surely somewhere rot
It boots not to know what.
Hence! spirit dear.'
(Good Lord, deliver!)

. . . . .

Maiden and babe and mother have passed by
Scatheless, yet left the doom glare red and high
Above the blackened valley of all dole,
Nor freed the laden soul.
Crawl, ye foul formless ills! about your prey;
Sink, O thrice lost! forsaken on the way;

Perish from day!
Since thrice hath passed in vain the innocent,
And hope is long, long spent,
And will is rent.
(Good Lord! Great God! deliver! deliver!)

Lo! Love comes wandering on the desert way.
Oh, watch! oh, pray!
Love with the rose-wreath red?
Ay, love rose-bound!
Ay, love thorn-crowned!
Crowned—bound—with cruel rose-thorns round his head!
(Good Lord, deliver!)

Love! love is here! that knoweth of all pain,
And of the linkèd chain,
And of the stain,
And of the whirling madness, dumb and dread;
Love! love is here that knoweth nought in vain!
Dead hope, dead will, oh! cry
Aloud! Love passeth by;
Love, that can love dead life to live again!
(Good Lord, deliver!)

New radiance hallows all the sickening air;
For love is here.
And right and left spring lilies at his nod,
Blessing the blighted sod,
For Love is here,

And round the gaunt crags echo of deep prayer
Is sighing everywhere,—
Is sighing everywhere!
For love is here.
(Deliver! Lord, deliver!)

Kneels that worn soul, for all the place is holy;
Breaks that sore heart, in utterance lost and lowly;—
"For Love's dear sake, great Powers, deliver me!
O Love, deliver me!"

. . . . . .

A little bird sweet twitters in a tree;
A little breeze comes coolly from the sea;
And broad the dawn-light widens o'er the lea.

LITTLE GODDESS IN GREY.

Brown leaves, grey sky, bare trees,
O fair little goddess in grey—
You in the midst the spirit of these
Revealed to my eyes for a day.

Bare trees, brown leaves, grey sky,
O sad little goddess in grey—
Hair like dead leaves, breath like a sigh
Of the ghost of an Autumn day.

Grey sky, bare trees, brown leaves,
O wan little goddess in grey—
Oh are you the spirit that grieves
For the death of an Autumn day!

O little goddess in grey,
How did you steal into sight?
Formed from this sad Autumn day
To slip back to ether at night?

Brown leaves, grey sky, bare trees,
O fair little goddess in grey—
You in the midst the spirit of these
Revealed to my eyes for a day.

LOVE-TRILOGY.

I.

SHE stood against the Orient sun,
Her face inscrutable for light;
A myriad larks in unison
Sang o'er her, soaring out of sight.

A myriad flowers around her feet
Burst flame-like from the yielding sod,
Till all the wandering airs were sweet
With incense mounting up to God.

A mighty rainbow shook, inclined
Towards her, from the Occident,
Girdling the cloud-wrack which enshrined
Half the light-bearing firmament.

Lit showers flashed golden o'er the hills,
And trees flung silver to the breeze,
And, scattering diamonds, fleet-foot rills
Fled laughingly across the leas.

Yea Love, the skylarks laud but thee,
And writ in flowers thine awful name;
Spring is thy shade, dread Ecstasy,
And life a brand which feeds thy flame.

II.

Winding all my life about thee,
Let me lay my lips on thine;
What is all the world without thee,
Mine—oh mine!

Let me press my heart out on thee,
Crush it like a fiery vine,
Spilling sacramental on thee
Love's red wine.

Let thy strong eyes yearning o'er me
Draw me with their force divine;
All my soul has gone before me
Clasping thine.

Irresistibly I follow,
As wherever we may run
Runs our shadow, as the swallow
Seeks the sun.

Yea, I tremble, swoon, surrender
All my spirit to thy sway,
As a star is drowned in splendour
Of the day.

III.

I charge you, O winds of the West, O winds with the wings of the dove,
That ye blow o'er the brows of my Love, breathing low that I sicken for love.

I charge you, O dews of the Dawn, O tears of the star of the morn,
That ye fall at the feet of my love with the sound of one weeping forlorn.

I charge you, O birds of the Air, O birds flying home to your nest,
That ye sing in his ears of the joy that for ever has fled from my breast.

I charge you, O flowers of the Earth, O frailest of things, and most fair,
That ye droop in his path as the life in me shrivels consumed by despair.

O Moon, when he lifts up his face, when he seeth the waning of thee,
A memory of her who lies wan on the limits of life let it be.

Many tears cannot quench, nor my sighs extinguish, the flames of love's fire,
Which lifteth my heart like a wave, and smites it, and breaks its desire.

I rise like one in a dream when I see the red sun flaring low,
That drags me back shuddering from sleep each morning to life with its woe.

I go like one in a dream, unbidden my feet know the way
To that garden where love stood in blossom with the red and white hawthorn of May.

The song of the throstle is hushed, and the fountain is dry to its core,
The moon cometh up as of old; she seeks, but she finds him no more.

The pale-faced, pitiful moon shines down on the grass where I weep,
My face to the earth, and my breast in an anguish ne'er soothed into sleep.

The moon returns, and the spring, birds warble, trees burst into leaf,
But Love once gone, goes for ever, and all that endures is the grief.

THE DEAD.

The dead abide with us! Though stark and cold
  Earth seems to grip them, they are with us still:
  They have forged our chains of being for good or ill;
And their invisible hands these hands yet hold.
Our perishable bodies are the mould
  In which their strong imperishable will—
  Mortality's deep yearning to fulfil—
Hath grown incorporate through dim time untold.

Vibrations infinite of life in death,
  As a star's travelling light survives its star!
  So may we hold our lives, that when we are
The fate of those who then will draw this breath,
  They shall not drag us to their judgment-bar,
And curse the heritage which we bequeath.

NIRVANA.

Divest thyself, O Soul, of vain desire!
Bid hope farewell, dismiss all coward fears;
Take leave of empty laughter, emptier tears,
And quench, for ever quench, the wasting fire
Wherein this heart, as in a funeral pyre,
Aye burns, yet is consumed not. Years on years,
Moaning with memories in thy maddened ears—
Let at thy word, like refluent waves, retire.

Enter thy soul's vast realm as Sovereign Lord,
And like that angel with the flaming sword,
Wave off life's clinging hands. Then chains will fall
From the poor slave of self's hard tyranny—
And Thou, a ripple rounded by the sea,
In rapture lost be lapped within the All.

WINGS.

Ascend, oh my Soul, with the wings of the lark ascend!
Soaring away and away far into the Blue,
Or with the shrill sea-gull to the breakers bend,
Or with the bee where the grasses and field flowers blend,
Drink out of golden cups of the honey-dew.

Ascend, oh my Soul, on the wings of the wind as it blows
Striking wild organ blasts from the forest trees,
Or on the zephyr bear love of the rose to the rose,
Or with the hurricane sower cast seed as he goes
Limitless ploughing the leagues of the sibilant seas.

Ascend, oh my Soul, on the wings of the choral strain
Invisible tier above tier upbuilding sublime;
Note as it scales after note in a rhythmical chain
Reaching from chaos and welter of struggle and pain,
Far into vistas auroral receding from time.

Ascend, take wing on the thoughts of the Dead, my Soul,
Breathing in colour and stone, flashing through epic and song:
Thoughts that like avalanche snows gather force as they roll
Mighty to fashion and knead the phenomenal throng
Of generations of men as they thunder along.

THE SOWER.

THE winds had hushed at last as by command;
The quiet sky above,
With its grey clouds spread o'er the fallow land,
Sat brooding like a dove.

There was no motion in the air, no sound
Within the treetops stirred,
Save when some last leaf fluttering to the ground
Dropped like a wounded bird.

Or when the swart rooks in a gathering crowd
With clamorous noises wheeled
Hovering awhile, then swooped with wranglings loud
Down on the stubbly field.

For now the big-thewed horses toiling slow
In straining couples yoked,
Patiently dragged the ploughshare to and fro
Till their wet haunches smoked.

Till the stiff acre, broken into clods,
Bruised by the harrow's tooth,
Lay lightly shaken, with its humid sods
Ranged into furrows smooth.

There looming lone, from rise to set of sun,
Without or pause or speed,
Solemnly striding by the furrows dun
The sower sows the seed.

The sower sows the seed, which mouldering,
Deep coffined in the earth,
Is buried now, but with the future Spring
Will quicken into birth.

Oh poles of birth and death! Controlling powers
Of human toil and need;
On this fair earth all men are surely sowers,
Surely all life is seed!

All life is seed, dropped in Time's yawning furrow,
Which with slow sprout and shoot
In the revolving world's unfathomed morrow
Will blossom and bear fruit.

THE STREET-CHILDREN'S DANCE.

Now the earth in fields and hills
Stirs with pulses of the Spring,
Nest embowering hedges ring
With interminable trills;
Sunlight runs a race with rain,
All the world grows young again.

Young as at the hour of birth:
From the grass the daisies rise
With the dew upon their eyes,
Sun-awakened eyes of earth;
Fields are set with cups of gold;
Can this budding world grow old?

Can the world grow old and sere,
Now when ruddy-tasselled trees
Stoop to every passing breeze,
Rustling in their silken gear;
Now when blossoms pink and white
Have their own terrestrial light?

Brooding light falls soft and warm,
Where in many a wind-rocked nest,
Curled up 'neath the she-bird's breast,
Clustering eggs are hid from harm;
While the mellow-throated thrush
Warbles in the purpling bush.

Misty purple bathes the Spring :
Swallows flashing here and there
Float and dive on waves of air,
And make love upon the wing ;
Crocus-buds in sheaths of gold
Burst like sunbeams from the mould.

Chestnut leaflets burst their buds,
Perching tiptoe on each spray,
Springing toward the radiant day,
As the bland, pacific floods
Of the generative sun
All the teeming earth o'errun.

Can this earth run o'er with beauty,
Laugh through leaf and flower and grain,
While in close-pent court and lane,
In the air so thick and sooty,
Little ones pace to and fro,
Weighted with their parents' woe ?

Woe-predestined little ones !
Putting forth their buds of life
In an atmosphere of strife,
And crime-breeding ignorance ;
Where the bitter surge of care
Freezes to a dull despair.

Dull despair and misery
Lie about them from their birth;
Ugly curses, uglier mirth,
Are their earliest lullaby;
Fathers have they without name,
Mothers crushed by want and shame.

Brutish, overburthened mothers,
With their hungry children cast
Half-nude to the nipping blast;
Little sisters with their brothers
Dragging in their arms all day
Children nigh as big as they.

Children mothered by the street:
Shouting, flouting, roaring after
Passers-by with gibes and laughter,
Diving between horses' feet,
In and out of drays and barrows,
Recklessly like London sparrows.

Mudlarks of our slums and alleys,
All unconscious of the blooming
World behind those housetops looming,
Of the happy fields and valleys,
Of the miracle of Spring
With its boundless blossoming.

Blossoms of humanity!
Poor soiled blossoms in the dust!
Through the thick defiling crust
Of soul-stifling poverty,
In your features may be traced
Childhood's beauty half effaced—

Childhood, stunted in the shadow
Of the light-debarring walls:
Not for you the cuckoo calls
O'er the silver-threaded meadow;
Not for you the lark on high
Pours his music from the sky.

Ah! you have your music too!
And come flocking round that player
Grinding at his organ there,
Summer-eyed and swart of hue,
Rattling off his well-worn tune
On this April afternoon.

Lovely April lights of pleasure
Flit o'er want-beclouded features
Of these little outcast creatures,
As they swing with rhythmic measure,
In the courage of their rags,
Lightly o'er the slippery flags.

Little footfalls, lightly glancing
In a luxury of motion,
Supple as the waves of ocean
In your elemental dancing,
How you fly, and wheel, and spin,
For your hearts, too, dance within.

Dance along with mirth and laughter,
Buoyant, fearless, and elate,
Dancing in the teeth of fate,
Ignorant of your hereafter,
That with all its tragic glooms
Blindly on your future looms.

Past and future, hence away!
Joy, diffused throughout the earth,
Centre in this moment's mirth
Of ecstatic holiday:
Once in all their lives' dark story,
Touch them, Fate! with April glory.

PADDY.

"WILLIAM O'GRADY, bachelor, and Mary Lee, spinsther.' So
His Riverence call'd us in the church, it's just five year ago.
Three times the banns was put up for us, but* the day that follow'd the third,
I meets my Mary an' says, "Let us each give back the other their word."
She knew why I spoke out then to her; it was growin' for mony a day
Afore at last it lep into speech, as we stood amoong the hay,
Down in the half-mown meddas: the sun was gone to rest,
An' the corncrake was crakin' an' croakin',—I knew where she had her nest—
It wasn't a sharp, quick quarrel iv ours, to blaze up strong an' die out;
It wasn't doubtin' each other we was, we niver had had a doubt,
But a thing that had smowldher'd an' smowldher'd until I'd made up my mind at last,
The loove† I'd been buildin' my future on must be a thing o' the past.

"Mary," says I, "there's a word, a name, that comes between us two,
A name that slips like a bit iv a sting from that purty mouth iv you;

* The *u* all through as in *put*. † As in look.

Ah, my child ! I know it well, so where's the good iv a fuss ?
Say good-bye, an' let it all be as it never had been for us.
Ye never would call me *Paddy* as ye do, if ye didn't despise
Somethin' about me or in me ; an' it does'nt seem right in my eyes
A girl should look down in anny way on the man she's goin' to wed—
That's enough ; ye know how the' say, soonest mendud where laste is said.
Ye're betther nor me a hoondherd times, but only betther becos
Ye're a woman—the sweetest woman on earth, the dearest that ever was—
An' not becos iv yer English blood, for, were ye a man, it's thrue,
I'd look ye sthraight in the face an' say, "I'm as good, every bit, as you."
What right had ye, Mary, I axe, to have that look in your face, an' spake
O' my counthry in words ye shouldn't ha' us'd, not for my sake, but right 'sake ;
Ring out yer scornful *Paddy !* as if my Irish blood was a taint
The Lord 'ud have to burn out o' me afore he could make me a saint ?
Counthry ! what good's in a counthry ? Why this, I take it, indeed—
God make us all wan flesh an' blood—that's thrue, but God decreed
Father an' moother, an' family o' broothers an' sisthers then,
An' next the clan, and next, I think, the counthry was made for men.

An' I loove my father an' moother well, an' broothers an' sisters too,
An' loove my people, an' loove my land, like a loyal man an' thrue.
Maybe it's proud ye're thinkin' me? I think there's some things, dear,
God manes us all to be proud about, an' I think I've wan iv 'um here.
I don't deserve to be despis'd; I'd be wrongin' God if I said
That becos He made me an Irishman, I ought to hang down my head.
England says, 'Where's Ireland's wrongs? They're all in the long ago;
We're thratin Ireland handsome enough!' An' all the while, ye know,
Englishmen wid a laff an' a sneer, or a pat on the back that's worse,
Talks o' the Paddies they've got to manage, an' turns their good to a curse.
Ireland's wrongs! Well, Mary—no, I am not goin' to jaw;
I'm sore all over, too sore to scold. It's a long while since I saw
Ye lookt down on me becos o' my blood; I thought I could make it right
But I could'nt—it wasn't anny use; so I say good-bye to-night.
It was only yester-eve, my dear, ye thrated me just like this,
An' I lay awake all night, an' I made up my mind that betther it is,
Ay, maid an' bachelor's better we part, nor go through a maybe long life,

A wife that despises her husband, a husband despis'd by his wife!
I've spoke about it manny a time; ye know I have, my dear;
I would'nt take y' up short like this, I wouldn't coome to ye here,
After the banns was call'd an' all, if I had'nt ha' spoke afore:
I know its dhreadful breakin' the plight, and its dreadful, ten times more
To go through wedlife wid broken peace. They'll know it's all my fau't;
They'll never wrong ye, Mary dear, wid the shadda iv a thought.
Forgive me touchin' at such a thing, but I know what things the' say—
They'll never dare to say mor' o' you, that's all: ye can thrust me? Eh?"

Then I turn'd away an' left her there, who never had said a word,
An' I listen'd, but grasshopper's chirrup and cry of corncrake only I heard.
I gother'd up my horruble grief an' sthrode away from the place,
An' left the girl, who had been my girl, wid a trust an' fear in her face.
An' I wisht I might be a woman for wonst, ay, so from my heart did I;
For a woman might ease her heart wid tears, but a man have no call to cry.

Crake! crake! crake! she called, that bird, an' the grasshopper chirrupt so sthrong,

An' the jew was fallin' heavy an' thick, as, alone I walkt along;
The air was dhrencht wid the sweets o' the flowers, for, all the way as I went,
The roses, an' woodbine, an' manny more, was givin' out such a scent.
An' afther a while I stopt my walk, an' down wi'h weary limb
An' wearier heart, I sat on a stone, an' life look't sthrange an' grim:
The flower breath seem'd to choke me a'most, an' even the feel o' the jew
Was like a fever an' not a cool, an' the moon came out an' grew,
Sailin' along in the big blue sky, she grew to an awful size;
An' all the stars seem'd starin' down on me wid their pitiless eyes:
Eyes o' fire, an' eyes o' fire, an' eyes o' fire they were,
Till I hid my face—an' when I lookt up, *her* eyes was shinin' there.
She puts her two arms round my neck, and says, "My love, forgive."
An' I looks sthraight into her face to see if my hope, just born, might live;
"Then, are we *equals* in God's sight?" "No love," says she, "becos
Ye're better nor me, for ye wouldn't give up yer manhood for me that was
Silly an' stupud enough"—but here I stopt her words wid a kiss—
"Are we equals now in blood an' birth?" an' Mary answer'd, "*Yes.*"

An' I rose to my feet, an' she flung herself on my breast in sobs an' tears :—
I wouldn't ha' made her cry like that for the joy iv a thousand years :
But thin for the *right* it's a different thing.—She cried that night, I say ;
But niver a tear since thin for me, an' we're married five years to-day.

FIRE-FLIES.

II.

O Fire-flies, would I knew the weft
  You have the weaving of!
For, as I watch you move, bereft
  Of thought, or will, or love,
I fear, O listless flames you weave
The fates of men who strive and grieve.

The web of life, the weft of dreams,
  You weave it ceaselessly;
A strange and ceaseless thing it seems,
  And made in mystery
Of wind and darkness threaded through
With light these heavens never knew.

O pale, mysterious, wandering fires,
  Born of the earth, alive
With the same breath that I respire,
  Who know, and think, and strive;
You circle round me, stranger far
Than any charm of any star.

WILL.

THE world is a garment for me to wear,
The days are my glance and the dark my hair.

Alone in the kingdom of space I stand
With Hell and Heaven in either hand.

Life is the smile, Death the sigh of me,
Who was, who am, who ever shall be.

Men and their gods pass away, but still
I am maker and end, I am God, I am Will.

PRELUDE.

Not only in great cities dwells great crime;
Not where they dash ashore, and break and moan,
Are waters deadliest; and not in rhyme,
Nor ever in words, the deepest heart is shown.
But, lost in silence, fearful things are known
To lonely souls, dumb passions, shoreless seas;
And he who fights with Death may shrink from these.

Alas! not all the greenness of the leaves,
Not all their delicate tremble in the air,
Can pluck one stab from a fierce heart that grieves.
The harvest-moon slants on as sordid care
As wears its heart out under attic eaves;
And though all round those folded mountains sleep,
Think you that sin and heart-break are less deep?

You see the shepherd and his flocks a-field,
Hunger and passion are present there, no less.
Fearful! when sudden starts forth revealed
Man's soul, unneighboured in its hideousness,
Man's darker soul, a memory to possess
Henceforth, by which all nature pales and dies,
As a city suddenly wan under sunset skies.

And I have heard long since, and I have seen,
Wrong that has sunk like iron into my soul,
That has eaten into my heart, has burned me and been
A pang and pity past my own control;
And I have wept to think what such things mean,
And I have said I will not weep alone,
Others shall sorrow and know as I have known.

Others shall learn and shudder, and sorrow, and know
What shame is in the world they will not see.
They cover it up with leaves, they make a show
Of Maypole garlands over, but there shall be
A wind to scatter their gauds, and a wind to blow
And purify the hidden dreaded thing
Festering underneath; and so I sing.

If God had given a sword into my hand,
I would go forth and fight the battles of God;
If God had given me wisdom, I would stand
And summon up truth with my divining rod:
But I have only a song at my command,
The froth of the world a song, as water weak:
Yet since it is my weapon, let me speak.

And listen you that are more mighty than I,
Who can go forth and do what I but dream—
Bear with me if I am vain, bear patiently.
I have lived so long with shadows, who only seem,
That now these real men murdered make me cry,
As there were none on earth but I and they,
And all else echoes, phantoms, witches' play.

But this is real, that men are wild and hard
And villainous; while other men look on
And say it is not so: a smell of nard
And not of blood is here; not woe-begone
These faces, but content. Ah, what reward
For all our strife had we their quiet homes
And quiet hearts and wish that never roams!

So say ye; for to think in all the world
There is so still and sweet a resting-place,
Where never the angry seas of passion are hurled
Against necessity, where none is base
And none is starved. There is a sort of grace
To keep so sweet a vision in your eyes,
And as you smile the true thing starves and dies.

Oh, help! help! it is murder that I cry,
And not a song to sell. Now if you smile
And hear me you are mad; you are mad, or I!
For I do not sing to enchant you or beguile;
I sing to make you think enchantment vile,
I sing to wring your hearts and make you know
What shame there is in the world, what wrongs, what woe.

Because your deaf ears, only, are to blame,
Not your deaf hearts. Look now, and if you see
Men as they are, contented in their shame,
I know that you will help, you will let them be
Foreseeing, noble, wise, and even as ye;—
Only your eyes I ask, only your ears,
The rest I leave to him who sees and hears.

Then let me sing, and listen to my song,
Though it is rough with sobs, and harsh and wild,
And often wanders, and is often long,
As mothers tell the death-bed of their child.
My child was gentle visions, and all were wrong,
And false, and cruel; and I bury it here:
Lend me your spades,—I do not ask a tear.

Lend me your souls and do not stand aloof,
Saying what happy lives these peasants win,
Praising the plushy lichen on the roof.
Leave off your praising, brothers, and come in.
See, round the hearth, squat Ignorance, Fever, Sin,
See on the straw the starving baby cries;
The mother thanks her God another dies.

Ah, look within! Without, the world is fair,
And you are all in love with solitude;
Yet look within: Evil and Pain are there.
Look, ye who say Life best is understood
Where greenish light falls dappling the moss-floored wood,
Look at the dumb brute souls who suffer and strive;—
Leave the dead world, and make their souls alive!

JANET FISHER.

PART I.

WHERE Janet Fisher lived and died,
The Eastland marshes reach away
For miles on miles of either side,
A river desolately wide
That is itself as drear as they.

With tufts of purple marish flowers
The rough grey grass is islanded;
The travelling thunder broods for hours
In gathered purple, when there lowers
The frequent tempest overhead.

Immense the eternal arch of sky;
Immense—utterly barren, too—
The plain in which no mountains lie
To mar that vastness, bounded by
The far horizon's shadowy blue.

Only the river's gradual bend
Shows stunted willows set in rows,
Rank pasture, kine the children tend,
Blown curls of smoke that swerve and ascend
From leaning hovels clustered close.

For on this barren aguish swamp,
  Even here is life, even here are men
To shake with palsy, stiffen with cramp,
To die ere fifty of the damp
  And fetid vapours of the fen.

Though how a village came to grow
  In such a vile and deathly air,
None knows; it may be long ago
The outcast of some crime or woe,
  Fleeing for refuge, sheltered there;

And through the habit of their race
  Or fearing yet the wrath of men,
Their children settled in the place,
And reaped scant harvest, in the face
  Of death, upon the poisonous fen.

And since the end was always near,
  And life so hard; and since they knew,
Save sloth and lust, no joys; each year
They served their senses less in fear,
  And more like beasts and viler grew.

Few friends were there, tho' all were kin:
  There was much strife, and many raids;
The hovels that they huddled in
Housed men whose brutal love was sin,
  Nameless children, and shameless maids.

Even among this soulless herd
Lived Janet Fisher; but she went
Along their streets, and no man stirred
Her quiet heart with look or word
To harm the village Innocent.

They meant she was an idiot born,
This one fair sight in foulest place;
This girl as fresh as early morn;
So fair—and yet too sad to scorn;
Too sunk for any hind to embrace.

Their one fair thing; their one thing good,
And she bereft of sense or will,
So were a mask of womanhood—
Sad,—but there was no heart to brood,
Upon the irremediable ill.

Yet crazy Janet found them kind—
They took her when her mother died
To live by turn with each; to wind
Their well-ropes, bind their sheaves, and mind
Their cattle grazing far and wide.

Yet often by the river-brim
She strayed, scattering seeds and flowers,
To wade in clear green shallows, and swim
Against the stream; or, through the dim
And quiet twilight, row for hours.

Day long, night long, her spirit slept,
And nothing shook the sullen drowse;
Yet oft a shadowy pleasure crept
All through her, where the boats were kept,
Beneath the dangling willow boughs.

She was so strong, she liked to feel
Her rapid stroke lend wings to the boat;
The water dashing against the keel;
The wind in her face and hair; the teal
And plovers crying; the weeds afloat.

Then only she—who was so far
Behind the merest child of all—
Was prouder, stronger, than others are;
And she could row to the harbour bar
And back, ten miles, ere night-dews fall.

PART II.

But all the harvest long, forlorn,
Unloosed, the boat rocked to and fro,
While Janet slept from eve till morn,
Dead-tired with gathering in the corn
From daybreak till the light was low.

How glad she was when autumn whirled
The slender yellowing willow leaves,
When all the plants looked shrivelled and curled,
And no more corn or fruit in the world
Was left to gather under eaves.

For then one evening, when the plain
  Was strangely bright i' the sun, and black
With thunder and unfallen rain
The sky, she sought her boat again,
  And bent the yielding branches back—

The thinning willow boughs—and found
  A man, half-stripped, beside the boat,
Burying hurriedly underground
And heaping yellow leaves around
  A stained and faded soldier's coat.

She stood beside him, nothing loth
  To watch his work unseen a span,
For she was neither scared nor wroth;
The splendour of the scarlet cloth
  Engrossed her, not the ragged man.

'Give me it!' eager Janet said
  At last; the man who heard her shook
Alarmed, and turned his startled head.
He was as wan and grey as the dead,
  And even Janet feared his look.

'All's up,' he moaned. 'Ay, call them out!
  I'm spent, you're strong,' he moaned;—'hit hard,
I'm down. Don't stare so, woman; shout!
Why, don't you know what you're about?
  I'm a deserter—there's reward.

'I'm spent.' But towards the scarlet coat
He saw unheeding Janet go;
Then turned, and turning saw the boat,
'Oh, God!' he cried, with straining throat,
'Girl, will you help me?' 'I can row.'

Poor Janet!—all those prayers were vain
To reach the incommunicable
Dim soul in her; and yet 'twas plain
He wished her, prayed her, to remain—
And one thing only she could do well.

She smiled. Her masters on the fen
Bade her: Do this, bear such a load,
Go there—for they were brutish men.
But this man spake her fair; and then
She longed to show him how well she rowed.

Within her boat she took her stand;
He followed her unquestioningly,
Got in, sat down, at her command;
She pushed her boat off from the land,
And, with the current, sought the sea.

Fierce yellow sunlight, beetling clouds
Heaped up in blackness overhead;
Still air in which the beasts were cowed,
And all the sounds were over-loud—
Yet Janet felt no thrill of dread.

Inland the sea-mews fled, that know
The earliest tempest-mutterings;
The swallows, skimming very low,
Dipped, and a livid western glow
Glanced off their sheeny underwings.

On through the ominous dusk the bark
That knew no fear, that had no soul,
Made for the sea. How should it hark
The wind, or see the air grow dark,
Or feel the widening waters roll?

And soulless as itself, and rash,
Janet rowed on elate and proud;
And thankful to escape the lash,
Her fellow heard no waters dash,
And did not see the gathering cloud.

Speechless he drowsed for many a mile,
Sunk to inert fatigue, half dead;
At last: 'It takes a long, long while,'
He muttered. Janet turned—her smile
Filled all his veins with sudden dread.

He started, shook the torpid drowse
Off him like water; all around
The river heaved in waves; and soughs
And moans of wind began to arouse
The storm; he could not see the ground.

Black walls of stormy air shut in
The boat; above, a gloomy vault
Shattered by lightning; roar and din
Where sea and hurtling stream begin
Their desperate, endless rebuff and assault.

'Woman!' he shouted; 'mad-woman! speak,—
Why did you let me sleep so long?
Is it the sea, the sea, you seek?'
The tears fell into the spray on her cheek:
'Help me,' she wailed; 'I'm spent, you're strong.

His words! his prayer! No safety, then,
If she were mad; no means to avert
The end. Far backwards lay the fen,
And here, instead of a world of men,
A danger no man shall desert.

Had she gone mad, perhaps, from fright,
This woman? 'Oh, my God!' he cried;
'To be alone at sea by night;
Lost in a storm—no hope, no light;
A maniac for my only guide!'

She crouched upon the lowest plank
And cried, and dashed her hands in the wave
That drenched her dress, and made so lank,
And straight her hair—that slowly sank
Them down towards the engulfing grave.

The man stooped down and looked at her,
  Half-blind with swirling spray of the sea.
Horror, impotent wrath, despair
At heart. What did she say? A prayer?
  'Poor crazy Janet; pity me!'

Then he was lost in very truth—
  How wild his hope! how vain his trust!
This woman—this, his angel of ruth—
Had lured him to his death; in sooth,
  To kill her would be merely just.

Should he kill her? Sea and sky,
  In answering storms heaved up, hung down;
They seemed to touch, they met so nigh,
One moment more all else must die:
  Why should he kill her? Let her drown!

'Help me!' she shrieked. But who could swim
  In such a sea,—a toppling bank
Of waves. She sprang, and clung to him;
Then noise, hate, storm, death, all grew dim;
  He caught her—tried to save her—sank.

But when the storm was stilled at last,
  The fishers found him on the strand,
One arm stretched out, still battling past
The waves, it seemed, and clasping fast
  A woman's corpse with one stiff hand.

They knew him not, but her they knew;
Poor Janet, missed a day and night,
Then wind-uncovered, stained with dew,
They found the coat; the wonder grew,
And the sad story came to light.

SUNSET.

THE sun is setting—not in colours gay,
  But pure as when he blazed with noonday heat;
  The upland path is gold before my feet,
Save where long, dancing, poplar-shadows play,
Or arching lindens cast a broader gray:
  This radiant hour, when peace and passion meet,
  Stirs with tumultuous breezes, freshly sweet,
The odorous languor of an August day.

Above is peace; below is gleeful strife;
  Aflame with sunshine, battling with the wind,
The trees rejoice in plentitude of life:
A sea of light is sleeping in the west,
  Untroubled light, o'erflowing heart and mind
With that empyreal rapture, which is rest.

THE PANTHEIST'S SONG OF IMMORTALITY.

Bring snow-white lilies, pallid heart-flushed roses,
Enwreathe her brow with heavy scented flowers;
In soft undreaming sleep her head reposes,
While, unregretted, pass the sunlit hours.

Few sorrows did she know—and all are over;
A thousand joys—but they are all forgot;
Her life was one fair dream of friend and lover,
And were they false—ah, well, she knows it not.

Look in her face and lose thy dread of dying;
Weep not, that rest will come, that toil will cease;
Is it not well to lie as she is lying,
In utter silence, and in perfect peace?

Canst thou repine that sentient days are numbered?
Death is unconscious Life, that waits for birth;
So did'st thou live, while yet thine embryo slumbered,
Senseless, unbreathing, e'en as heaven and earth.

Then shrink no more from Death, though Life be gladness,
Nor seek him, restless in thy lonely pain;
The law of joy ordains each hour of sadness,
And firm or frail, thou canst not live in vain.

What though thy name by no sad lips be spoken,
And no fond heart shall keep thy memory green?
Thou yet shalt leave thine own enduring token,
For earth is not as though thou ne'er hadst been.

See yon broad current, hasting to the ocean,
Its ripples glorious in the western red:
Each wavelet passes, trackless; yet its motion
Has changed for evermore the river bed.

Ah, wherefore weep, although the form and fashion
Of what thou seemest, fades like sunset flame?
The uncreated Source of toil and passion,
Through everlasting change abides the same.

Yes, thou shalt die: but these almighty forces,
That meet to form thee, live for evermore:
They hold the sun in their eternal courses,
And shape the tiny sand-grains on the shore.

Be calmly glad, thine own true kindred seeing
In fire and storm, in flowers with dew impearled;
Rejoice in thine imperishable being,
One with the essence of the boundless world.

SONNET.

Most wonderful and strange it seems, that I
Who but a little time ago was lost
High on the waves of passion and of pain,
With aching heart and wildly throbbing brain,
Who peered into the darkness, deeming vain
All things there found if but One thing were lost,
Thus calm and still and silent here should lie,
Watching and waiting,—waiting passively.

The dark has faded, and before mine eyes
Have long, grey flats expanded, dim and bare;
And through the changing guises all things wear
Inevitable Law I recognise:
Yet in my heart a kind of feeling lies
Which half a hope and half is a despair.

SONNET.

Two terrors fright my soul by night and day:
The first is Life, and with her come the years;
A weary, winding train of maidens they,
With forward-fronting eyes, too sad for tears;
Upon whose kindred faces, blank and grey,
The shadow of a kindred woe appears.
Death is the second terror; who shall say
What form beneath the shrouding mantle nears?

Which way she turn, my soul finds no relief,
My smitten soul may not be comforted;
Alternately she swings from grief to grief,
And, poised between them, sways from dread to dread.
For there she dreads because she knows; and here,
Because she knows not inly faints with fear.

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN.

(PART II.)

THE CURSE.

"HURRAH for home! o'er leagues of foam,
Half earth and ocean round,
Come breeze or gale, pack on all sail,
To speed the Homeward-bound!
Blow fair, blow foul, smile heaven or scowl,
We reck not of your wrath,
And scarcely care for foul or fair,
Upon our homeward path!"

The midnight watch would sometimes stay,
Leaned o'er the moonlit foam,
To watch how well she cleft her way,
And talk of friends and home.
And lips unused their speech to mar,
From oath and curse were stayed
By thought of someone yet afar,
Who watched at home and prayed.

The frost-bound icebergs soon were passed,
Then outposts one by one,
Still straggling north, but wasting fast,
Beneath the torrid sun.

The Cape was cleared, still north they steered,
Through a dull furnace glow;
They scarce could speak, and ere a week
Their water casks ran low.

The shore and sky were ashen white,
The sea dull leaden grey,
And through livid haze burned the smouldering light
Of a brazen sun all day.
A fainting air came off the land,
And died along the deep,
The pennon raised, the topsails fanned,
Then sighed itself to sleep.

The captain fixed an anxious gaze,
With frown and muttered oath,
A sinking sun and rising haze,
Then turned and cursed them both.
He searched the shore with eager eye,
No opening met his view,
And then he raised his glance to try
If yet the topsails drew.

They drew, and though no breath below
The slackened courses[1] swelled,
Or stirred the sea, still full and free
Her onward way she held.
Still on her right stretched faint and white
A flickering film of land,
While northward lay across her way
A palm-crowned tongue of sand.

[1] Courses, the lower sails of a full-rigged ship.

'Twas gained, 'twas cleared, and then appeared,
By anxious gazers scanned,
An inlet wide, and far inside
A hollow curve of strand.
The sails were trimmed, as fresh'ning more
The breeze came off the bay,
And stretching to the farther shore,
In one long tack she lay.

Then round she came, and back they stood,
To find that they had failed
To weather by a single rood
The spot from which they sailed.
The captain thundered at the men,
And loud and fiercely swore,
He took the helm, and back again
Across the bay she bore.

Once more she left the point behind,
With all the sheets hauled home,
And sails trimmed closer to the wind,
That freshened o'er the foam.
They could not tell how it befell,
Close to the wind she lay,
Yet failed once more 'twixt shore and shore,
To gain one inch of way.

So as to wanderers in a maze,
The hours of day went by,
The sun dropped down into the haze,
And a film came o'er the sky.

The fog stole up, the scud crept down,
From north to south it grew,
Stretched east and west, from central crown
To lowest verge of blue.

Till soaring mist and trailing cloud
Hemmed in the narrowing view,
And round the ship a ghostly shroud
In shrinking circles drew.
So thick it settled o'er her now,
That e'er she tacked once more,
They heard the surf beneath her bow,
Yet could not see the shore.

. . . . . .

"Ere morn I'll moor my ship inside
Though angels bar the way,
Else may I, beating in this tide,
Abide the Judgment Day!"
As thus he spoke, defiance woke
In all who listening near,
And from the thirsty crew there broke,
A loud applauding cheer.

The grey-haired seaman had not stirred,
But stood before him there,
Till when he heard that dreadful word,
He crossed himself in prayer.
And straight a gust swooped on the ship,
And struck her all aback,
And like a steed that feels the whip,
She swerved from off her track.

The sails broke loose—the yards flew round,
And rope and shroud swung free,
The seaman, in their tackle wound,
Was hurled into the sea.
He sank in falling from the height,
And when he rose once more,
Through fog and haze and gathering night
He saw nor ship nor shore.

But scarcely had he breathed to Heaven
One mute and heartfelt prayer,
When by the waves against him driven
A floating cask was there.
He had not feared, but now again
For life he fiercely craved,
And with the clutch of drowning men,
He grasped it and was saved.

The gust brought up a pall for night,
And tore her pall away,
The tattered shreds of mist took flight,
And settled o'er the bay.
The ship was folded in a cloud,
From earth and sea and sky,
And no man's glance has pierced that shroud
Save when his end was nigh.

Resounding to the thunder's din,
Down swooped the dark, as though
The arch of heaven were falling in
On all things here below.

Its roof in rifts of glory broke,
Abyss flamed into height,
And the dead heart of midnight woke,
Convulsed in throbs of light.

The void profound was stirred with sound,
And quick with stings of fire,
And echoing far, from star to star,
Pealed heaven's tremendous choir,
Those flaming shafts whose torment wrung
All secrets from the dark,
Pierced not the shield of shadow flung
Around the fated bark.

But when the wrath of the typhoon
In devastating sweep,
With midnight in its heart at noon,
Is loosed upon the deep,
And in its clutches onward whirled
All helpless and forlorn,
With naked spars and canvas furled,
Some crippled ship is borne.

Drowned deep in spray, the destined prey
Of ocean's gaping jaws,
Still blindly stumbling on her way,
With many a dizzy pause,
She sees a vessel tall with sail,
Uplifted as a tower,
Drive like a cloud before the gale,
Yet stoop not to its power;

With drift on drift of snowy cloth,
  Wreathed high on mast and spar,
Tempting the hurricane's wild wrath,
  Swift as a shooting star.
The waters smoke—the whirlwinds wake,
  Their chaos is her home,
And from her brow in lightnings break
  The splintered sheaves of foam.

A wraith along the deep she goes,
  Till nearing swift and pale,
Upon the fated wreck she throws
  The shadow of her sail.
And through the storm with hollow chime,
  A spectral hail they hear,
"How goes the world? Methinks 'twere time
  That Doomsday should appear!"

LIFE IN DEATH.

I HEARD him in the autumn winds,
I felt him in the cadent star,
And in the shattered mirror of the wave,
That still in death a rapture finds,
I caught his image faint and far;
And musing in the twilight on the grave,
I heard his footsteps stealing by,
Where the long churchyard grasses sigh.

But never might I see his face,
Though everywhere I found Death's hand,
And his large language all things living spake;
And ever heavy with the grace
Of bygone things through all the land
The song of birds or distant church-bells brake.
'I will arise and seek his face,'
I said, 'ere wrapped in his embrace.'

'For Death is king of life,' I cried;
'Beauty is but his pomp and state;
His kiss is on the apple's crimson cheek,
And with the grape his feet are dyed,
Treading at noon the purple vat;
And flowers, more radiant hued, more quickly seek
His face betraying in disguise,
Their young blooms are but autumn dyes!

Then I arose ere dawn, and found
A faded lily. 'Lo, 'tis He!
I will surprise him in his golden bed,
Where, muffled close from light and sound,
He sleeps the day up.' Noiselessly
I drew the faded curtains from his head,
And, peeping, found, not Death below,
But fairy life set all arow.

A chrysalis next I chanced upon:
'Death in this dusty shroud has dwelt!'
But stooping saw a winged Thing, sun-kist,
Crusted with jewels Life had won
From Death's dim dust; and as I knelt,
Some passion shook the jewels into mist,
Some ecstasy of coming flight,
And lo, he passed in morning light.

And as I paced, still questioning,
Behold, a dead bird at my feet;
The faded violets of his filmy eyes,
And tender loosened throat to sing
No more to us his nocturns sweet,
Told me that death at length before me lies.
But gazing, quick I turned in fear,
Not Death, but teeming Life was there.

Then haply Death keeps house within?
And with the scapel of keen thought
I traced the chemic travail of the brain,
The throb and pulse of Life's machine,

And mystic force with force still caught
In the embrace that maketh one of twain;
And all the beating, swift and slow,
Of Life's vibrations to and fro.

And still I found the downward swing,
Decay, but ere I cried, 'Lo, here!'
The upward stroke rang out glad life and breath
And still dead winters changed with spring,
And graves the new birth's cradle were;
And still I grasped the flying skirts of Death,
And still he turned, and, beaming fair,
The radiant face of Life was there.

A VISION OF WOMANHOOD.

OUT in the desert, half-submerged, a sphinx
Gazed at her awful mirrored loveliness,
In the dull deep waters sunk of Lethe, fed
By the dark river of the unknown source;
Gazed at the pure high face that answered hers,
As moon to moon, and lovely moulded curves
Of motherhood that shaped the pure white breast,
And deemed she saw herself, nor knew
That just below the shining surfaces
The woman sickened into unclean beast,
Bestial, with ravening claws and murderous strength;
And all around were strewn the bones of men,
And eyeless sockets filled with desert dust
Of those who cursed her with a dying curse.
Then a great Angel, standing in the sun,
Smote those dull Lethe-waters and they fled,
And all her hidden shame to her lay bare;
And in her agony she knew herself
To be half woman and half beast unclean,
That grew to her and made one shuddering flesh
With her, inextricably one with death.
And all her being burned as in a furnace,
And the cold stone was fused about her heart
Into warm blood and sweat of agony;
While men awe-stricken gazed upon her woe,
And every kingdom wailed because of her,
And all the land was darkened for her sake.
Then as one dead before her feet I fell,
Made one with her intolerable shame.

Æons or hours did that deep trance endure?
When the dark veil of that abysmal sleep
Was rent in twain by a loud trumpet sound,
And starting up, I saw a temple vast,
And many worshippers therein were bowed.
But on the upturned faces, I beheld
The light of a new world, and homage high,
As that a queen may render to her king,
Who owning a subjection yet remains
A majesty—such pure manhood on them lay.
And high above all worshippers enthroned,
Lo, the Egyptian woman who abode
With Death in desert places; and behold
The beast was slain, the deathful riddle solved
That slew the man; and throned upon men's hearts—
A wall of fire to guard her round about—
A perfect woman in her weakness rose,
And in her arms the future's child divine.

THE LAIRD'S WOOING.

(*The Gudewife.*)

"*The auld Laird again!*—Keep us a'!—
Whan the hoose is in sic a like steer![1]—
An' ilka ane says it's our Jeanie
That brings him sae aften doun here.
Gudeman! ye're a fusionless crater!—
That pipe's never out o' yer mou!—
To see ye sit dosin' awa there,
A bodie wad think ye were fou!—
Fo'k needna be puir an' puirlike, man,
Ye've nae glisk o' speerit ava!
Noo; what wad ye say gin *our Jeanie*
Was Leddy o' Featherstane Ha'?"

(*The Gudeman.*)

'Hoot-toot, noo, gudewife! ye're aye ettlin'[2]
At gear that's ower hie for your haun'—
It's no for a lass like our Jeanie
To wed wi' the grit o' the laun'!
An' troth! we'd hae mickle to brag o'!
Ye've waled us a *bonnie* gudeson!
To gie our bit winsome young lassie
An auld wizened bodie like yon!
Na! na! there's nae lack o' braw wooers:
There's *Jamie*, the flow'r o' them a'—
I'd 's lief see her wife to the pleughman
As Leddy o' Featherstane Ha'!

. . . . . .

[1] Upset. [2] You are always straining at things too high for your hand.

(*Jeanie, sol.*)

Tho' faither an' mither may wrangle,
I'll snood up by bonnie bricht hair.
The Laird says my een are like di'monds,
An' mony a ane I micht wear!
Me to hae jewels sae costly!
Me to wear satins an' silk!
An' ne'er put a haun' to the spinnin',—
Or fash wi' the butter an' milk!
The linties[1] sang loud at the dawnin'—
I heard but ae sang frae them a',
It was 'Welcome to bonnie young Jeanie,
The Leddy o' Featherstane Ha'!'

The Laird he whiles tells me o' Lun'non,
An' a' the braw sichts he has seen;
It's like to the Court he maun tak' me,
An' aiblins[2] I'll crack[3] wi' the Queen!
The countryside a' will be glowrin'
To see my braw carriage an' pair
Gang by wi' a dirl an' a clatter,
To stoun the guid folk at the fair!
My heid's[4] rinnin' roun' jist wi' thinkin'!
An' yet,—the bit tear-drop maun fa'
For *ane* I maun think on nae mair, when
I'm Leddy o' Featherstane Ha'!

I fetch'd hame the kye at the gloamin',[5]—
The gloamin' sae sweet an' sae free!—
An' down by the side o' the plantin'
Was *somebody* waitin' for me!

[1] Linnet. [2] Perhaps. [3] Chat. [4] Head. [5] Twilight.

O ! wan as a ghaist was my Jamie,
A wan an' a waesome like sicht !
His stern look gaed straucht[1] thro' an' thro' me,
An' maist gar'd me swarf wi' the fricht ![2]
But never a word spak the laddie,
That lo'ed me the best o' them a' !
Never a word but this ae word—
'Ma Leddy o' Featherstane Ha' !'

. . . . . .

I plighted my troth e'er we pairted—
I plighted it ance an' for a' !
An' aye I'll be faithfu' to Jamie,
My pleughman—the flow'r o' them a' !
Was't *me* thocht to wed the auld carle !—
Yon puir, pookit[3] bodie, indeed !
Na ! the fause fiend himsel' maun hae thocht it,
An' syne slipt it into my heid !
I trow he'll be daunderin'[4] doun noo,
But blithely I'll bid him gae 'wa,
An' fetch, frae the braw Lun'non lasses,
A Leddy to Featherstane Ha' !

[1] Straight. [2] Almost made me swoon with the fright.
[3] Poor, shrunken. [4] Sauntering down now.

DEATH AND LIFE.

Death, I hate thee,
World, I love thee,
Give me breath, O let me live,
In the whirl and rush of doing,
Drink in all thou hast to give.

Let me wander
Down where yonder
Streamlets trickle through the plain;
Let me in the woodlands linger,
Fill my soul with joyful pain.

Let me look in human faces
Hurrying through the earthly roar,
Where, with faltering human paces,
Mortals walk the trembling floor.

Sadly, brother, dost thou ponder,
Is thy pain so hard to bear?
Must thy soul forever wander
In the darkness of despair?

Come, then,—My soul too is blending,
My feet too are bruised and sore;
Hand in hand we'll glide unheeding
Through the mists that hide the shore.

Whether joy or doom awaits us,
We have loved and conquered fate,
And though Hell and Devils hate us,
Love can pass them at the gate.

If our gilded dreams are worthless,
If we stumble into graves
When our life-dance, wild and mirthless,
Stills with Time's advancing waves,

Yet our living and our loving
Has been done. Oh! brother mine!
With the wild world we are moving
Through the stars and pale moonshine.

With the wild world we are rushing
Through unfathomed deeps of Space,
All our endless wailings hushing,
Endless skies look in our face.

Dreams and mysteries around us,
Earth's strange fortunes may we share,
For a season fate has found us
Riding through mysterious air.

We may wander forth in Spring-time,
In the childhood of the year;
Nature's joy-bells ring their May-chime,
May-winds waft it to our ear.

In the meadows, in the gardens,
Young life pushes through the ground,
Springing through the graves where hardens
Last year's life to dead compound.

Oh! my brother, there to listen
To the voices of the wood,
There to watch the raindrops glisten
In the sunshine's glancing flood.

'Tis to listen to the voices
Of the spirits of our life;
'Tis to learn their dim devices
In our hearts of woe and strife.

For the secret of our strivings
Lives in bird and leaf and flower,
And great Nature's strange contrivings
Speaks in every cloud and shower.

SUDDEN DEATH.

TWIT-TWIT-TWITTER, all the merry morning through—
Twit-twit-twitter, from the twisted apple-tree—
Little nest among the blossom, little eggs of speckled blue,
Little mate, brown-breasted, brooding o'er them, one, and two, and three.
Twit-twit-twitter—just a little singing bird,
Just a handful of brown feathers,
That had chirped through winter weathers,
And a little heart that beat beneath the downy throat it stirred.

Chip-chip-chirrup, where the garden beds are green—
Just a minute's crash and terror—just the firing of a gun—
She may wait and she may weary, little mate, the boughs between,
For flight of his to flash across the blossom and the sun.
Chip-chip-chirrup, just a blood-bedabbled breast—
Just a tuft of down and feather,
Clinging piteously together,
And a small brown thing that never more will sing beside a nest.

VILLANELLE.

In every sound, I think I hear her feet—
  And still I wend my altered way alone,
And still I say, "To-morrow we shall meet."

I watch the shadows in the crowded street—
  Each passing face I follow one by one—
In every sound I think I hear her feet.

And months go by—bleak March and May-day heat—
  Harvest is over—winter well-nigh done—
And still I say, "To-morrow we shall meet."

Among the city squares, when flowers are sweet,
  With every breath a sigh of hers seems blown—
In every sound I think I hear her feet.

Belfry and clock the unending hours repeat,
  From twelve to twelve—and still she comes in none—
And still I say, "To-morrow we shall meet."

Oh, long-delayed to-morrow!—hearts that beat
  Measure the length of every minute gone—
In every sound I think I hear her feet.

Ever the suns rise, tardily or fleet,
And light the letters on a churchyard stone,—
And still I say, "To-morrow we shall meet."

And still from out her unknown, far retreat
She haunts me with her tender undertone—
In every sound I think I hear her feet—
And still I say, "To-morrow—we shall meet."

POVERTY.

I HAD a dream of Poverty by night,
And saw the holy palmer wending by
With pensive mien and radiant upturned eye,
Drinking the tender moon's approving light.

I saw her take the hills and climb the height,
While broad below the city murmured nigh,
Spangling the dust with lamps of revelry
That made the mellow planets pale to sight.

Yet kept my love her face toward the stars
Till broke the dawn against the mountain ridge
And angels met her on the misty way;

Then heaven looked forth on her through golden bars,
Then gleamed her feet along a rosy bridge,
Then passed she noiseless into eternal day.

THE CHILDREN OF LIR.

MOURNFULLY, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle run to the sea;
White their lips that ever mutter
Of a tale they long to utter.
Softly sleep, my Fionnula!
Never more thy sad wings trailing,
Through the rack of tempests wailing,
Helpless in thine anguish human,
Weary swan and hapless woman!—
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Mighty Lir, why hast thou taken
To thy widowed breast forsaken
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
One to hate thy children tender,
So that Lucifer may lend her
Power to steal from thine embraces
Curling heads and blooming faces?
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Mournfully, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle run to the sea.
"Laughing girl, awake so early,
Rise and deck thy beauty rarely."
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)

"Hear my voice that is thy mother's;
Rise, and call thy gentle brothers;
We will journey all together
Through the pleasant summer weather"—
Fionnula, O Ulula!

"To thy grandsire, lone and agèd,
In his distant palace cagèd,"
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
"We will travel through the sunshine,
You shall kiss him in the moonshine,
He will stroke your flowing tresses,
Smiling at your young caresses,"
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Sullenly and mournfully
The waves of Moyle run to the sea.
"Mother, what is this dark water?"
"Let us tarry by it, daughter!"
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
"In its wilds of lake and river,
Tarry thou a swan for ever,
All your happy words are spoken,
All your girlhood's promise broken,"
Fionnula, O Ulula!

"Take thy brothers with thee yonder;
So for ever may ye wander"
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
"Till the sound of sweet bells ringing,
Reach your ears, a message bringing;

Long your hearts shall burn to hear it,
Long 'twill be ere I shall fear it!"
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Mournfully, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle run to the sea.
Eiré's princess, Lir's sweet daughter,
Breasts the dark and lonely water;
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Three wild swans drift out together,
Through the blue and sunny weather,
Drooping wings and heads that languish,
Sickening with their human anguish—
Fionnula, O Ulula!

"Oh, my brothers, keep beside me,
Lest the rolling wave divide me,"
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
"From your tender woe and weakness,
Little brothers, and your meekness,
Let my braver eyes behold you,
And my stronger wings enfold you!"
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Mournfully, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle run to the sea.
"Here are lilies golden-headed,
Unto white companions wedded;"
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
"Let us rest amid their sweetness—
No, the curse in its completeness

Keeps us ever shifting, shifting,
Three wild swans for ever drifting!"
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Sluggish years, how slow your motion,
Rolling in the rolling ocean,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
To the dirge of Moyle's dark water,
Breaking over Lir's sad daughter,
Rising, falling, ebbing, flowing,
Slowly coming, slowly going—
Fionnula, O Ulula!

O stormily and mournfully
The waves of Moyle foam to the sea;
Winter blasts come forth to meet them,
Bitterly the whirlwinds greet them,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Side by side for ever clinging
'Gainst the tempest, panting, winging,
Seeking by the lake's white edges
Shelter 'mid the whistling sedges—
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Seasons coming, seasons going,
Times have changed beyond our knowing,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Lir hath mourned himself to madness,
Death hath ta'en away his sadness,
Now another hath his glory,
And forgotten is thy story,
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Mournfully, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle sob in the sea.
Fishers on the green bank yonder,
Stay their hands and gaze in wonder
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula !)
Where amid the breakers striving,
Beaten by the rain-winds driving,
Greyly gleam the three together,
Phantom creatures, hurrying—whither ?
Fionnula, O Ulula !

Like our dreams, confused and broken,
Pass the years till God hath spoken.
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula !)
From our mountains and our meadows
Move at last the morning shadows,
Comes the banisher of sadness,
Comes the messenger of gladness,
Fionnula, O Ulula !

Dreamfully and mournfully
The waves of Moyle rock in the sea.
Hark, the sound of seraphs singing
Like the chime of sweet bells ringing !
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula !)
Comes a ship across the ocean,
Winging with an angel's motion,
Bearing one whose words of wonder
Rend the clouds of woe asunder,
Fionnula, O Ulula !

Hark, the sound of children singing!
Hark, the chime of sweet bells ringing!
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
See the fair procession filing
Through the woods and pastures smiling,
White-robed creatures, loved, forgiven,
Newly washed in dews from heaven.
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Peacefully, O peacefully,
The waves of Moyle sleep in the sea.
Banners flying, censers swinging,
Peace on earth brave men are singing,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Holy Patrick, pardon bearing,
Far in front the cross up-rearing,
To the winds their Master nameth,
To the hills their Lord proclaimeth,
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Ring the bells, O ring them clearly,
Ring them late and ring them early,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Through the sun and through the shadow,
O'er the moorland and the meadow,
Lakes, and streams, and rocky places,
And the sandy sea-girt spaces!
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Mournfully, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle run to the sea.
Let the sound go roaming, roaming,
"Hark, the Lord of love is coming!"
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Fling it far across the water
To the ear of Lir's sad daughter;
Ring it louder, ring it clearer,
"All ye stricken ones, draw nearer!"
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Now upon the wave-girt heather
Saint and flock have knelt together,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
O'er the voice of their appealing,
What is this strange music stealing?
"'Tis the swan!" a fisher crieth,
"Swan that singeth while she dieth"—
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Mournfully, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle run to the sea.
Lo! the phantom three appearing,
Far away, yet nearing, nearing,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Three grey forms with pinions dragging,
Winging feebly, panting, flagging,
Beaten by the outward breaker,
Battling, ever weaker, weaker—
Fionnula, O Ulula!

To the shore the waters sweep them;
Well may tender spirits weep them,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Surely these are human creatures,
Broken forms and wasted features;
On the beach behold them lying,
Faintly breathing, slowly dying,
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Mournfully, O mournfully,
The waves of Moyle run to the sea;
Bathe them in the hallowing water—
Lir's brave sons and Lir's sweet daughter.
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
Dig the grave, and kindly lay them
Where no waves nor winds affray them,
Never more their sad wings trailing
Through the rack of tempests wailing,
Fionnula, O Ulula!

Plant the cross of Christ above them,
Bid the little children love them,
(Softly sleep, my Fionnula!)
While at eve they cease their playing,
Dimpled cheeks together laying,
Listening to the wind-bells ringing,
Hark!" they say, "the swans are singing!"
Fionnula, O Ulula!

A WITNESS.

Wild and eerie was the night,
And the snow fell thick and white,
And across the moaning sea
Sped the spirits wearily;
And the north wind from the moor
Railed and rattled at the door;
And against the window-pane
Smote the bitter hail and rain.

Wild and eerie was the night,
But the fire within burned bright,
And my mother span apace,
With the red light on her face;
And my father, as he sat,
Slowly stroked the purring cat,
While she lay upon my knee;—
For no fear or care had we.

Wild and eerie was the night,
Yet no cause had we for fright,
And the moaning of the sea
Seemed a cradle-song to me;
And the loose wind-rattled pane,
Smitten sharply by the rain,
But a playmate singing low,
Not the harbinger of woe.

Wild and eerie was the night,
Yet in Mary's blessed sight
Darkest night is clear as day;
And the sweet saints ever pray
To the dear Lord on His throne,
When the nights are dark and lone,—
So our priest says constantly,
And his words seemed true to me.

Wild and eerie was the night,
Yet the faint and chequered light
Of the log-fire, cast athwart
Wheel and worker, subtly wrought
From the old forms that I knew,
Visions strange, and weird, and new,
Till I slept the young child's sleep,
Dreamless, visionless, and deep.

. . . . .

Sudden woke I, with a start,
And a cold fear at my heart.
Through the clamour at the pane
Came a sound that was not rain,
Wind, or hail, or storm, or sea,
But a deadlier enemy!
With a crash, the fast-barred door
At my feet fell, on the floor!

Three men, through the open space
Rushed into our dwelling-place;
Seized my father by the hair,
While my mother, in despair,

Strove to shield him with her breast.
God! how can I tell the rest?
Swift they dragged him from our sight,
Out into the fearful night!

Never, while I live, shall I
Lose the utter misery
Of my mother's maddened eyes!
Always to my ears will rise
Her despairing shriek, as they
Tore him from her arms away—
Bleeding, wounded, scarce alive,
How should he with three men strive?

Out into that awful night
Rushed they, from her tortured sight.
For an instant, with shrill groan,
Sank she fainting, cold as stone;
But full soon her face flushed red:
"Hear that sound, my child!" she said;
"'Tis your father's dying cry,
As they murder him hard-by!

"When he's dead (heed carefully
What I say; ah, woe is me!
Father's blood and mother's tears
Yield you strength beyond your years!)
Then will come my turn to die.
(Darling listen heedfully)
In yon cupboard must you hide;
By the small crack in its side

"Set your face, where you can see
All the bitter tragedy.
I will struggle as I may.
See, the fire is bright as day;"—
Here she flung logs fresh and dry,
And the fire blazed clear and high—
"In this light your eyes can scan
Face and form of every man."

Then she set me in my place,
With a smile on her wan face;
And she kissed me, held me near
Her poor heart, till I could hear
Its swift beats; and then she said,
"Help will come when I am dead;
And, my child, your voice must be
Raised to tell the truth for me.

"At each face, look well, my own;
Never think you are alone;
See, I lay upon your knee
Pussy for sweet company.
Very soon the sun will rise,"
(Oh, the anguish of her eyes!)
"Then, my darling, you will tell
What you saw. Watch well! watch well!

As she kissed me, last of all,
Said she, "Let no whisper fall
From your lips, but silently
Heed whate'er you hear or see."

Hasty footsteps filled the place;
Muttered curses fell apace;
Back the murderers had sped.
God! and was my father dead?

Lurid flashed the new-fed fire,
Springing upward, brighter, higher—
On her white face as she strove,
Strong in vengeance and in love,
'Gainst those red knives, dripping wet
With my father's life-blood yet.
Oh, my God! I know not well
How time sped! At last she fell!

Stricken through and through again,
With no feeling left but pain,
She had striven, that each man
Well her child might note and scan:
Think you I forget these three?
Not till life forgetteth me!
Silent watched I till they fled,
Then I crept out to the dead,

And ye found me. Here I stand,
God's own book within my hand:
In His awful sight I swear
That the murderers stand there!

FRA ANGELICO AT FIESOLE.

(I.)

HOME through the pleasant olive woods at even
He sees the patient milk-white oxen go;
Without his lattice doves wheel to and fro,
A great moon climbs the wan green fields of heaven.
An hour since, the sun-veil whereon are graven
Gold bells and pomegranates in scarlet show
Parted, and lo! the city's spires of snow
Flushed like an opal, and the streets gold paven!
Then the night's purple fell and hid the rest,
And this monk's eyes filled with happy tears
That come to him beholding all things fair:
A bird's flight over wan skies to the nest;
The great sad eyes of beasts, the silk wheat ears,
Flowers, or the gold dust on a baby's hair.

POPPIES.

THROUGH the land at Midsummer,
Singing, Love came.
Gracious was the new-comer,
Like a God in face and limb,
And the trailing wings of him
Tipped with flame.
Red gold hair, and flushed face
Warm as the south;
And he stood a little space,
By the sunrise seas of wheat,
Took wild rose and meadow-sweet,
And laid them on his mouth.

In his luminous deep eyes
A slow smile grew,
When a small bird, brown and wise,
Sudden sang a yard away,
A little mad fair roundelay
To skies of blue;
And ah! his eyes were very sad,
With tears o'erfilled,
And died the grave sweet smile he had,
When in the wide wheat's wrinkled gold
He saw a small bird, soft and cold,
Its singing stilled.

Many a gift he bore that hour
For many a one,
Rose, and rue, and passion-flower;
As he went, he gatherèd
The silken poppies, tall and red,
Flaunting in the sun.
Took them to him tenderly,
The flowers of sleep,
Kissed their lips with many a sigh,
"Now I have no better thing
Than a Lethe cup to bring
To some that weep."

So he came, in morning hours,
To a garden wild,
Where among hushed dreaming flowers,
A pale, golden-headed girl,
Like a daisy or a pearl,
Stood and smiled.
The reddest rose in all the land,—
He held to her;
Fell the poppies from his hand
Brushed the gold bloom of her hair
Smote her innocent eyes, and fair
Till they closed were.

When the slumber took her eyes,
Skies were blue and gold,
The world was fair as Paradise,
And when she woke, at, well-a-day!
The wintry world was bare and grey,
And she was cold,

Very tired and most forlorn :
"Now, heart, wilt break?
Our life's day is gone since morn ;
All the years like shifting sands,
Slipped from out those empty hands,
For a dream's sake!"

ROBIN AND MEG.

THE kye had been milkit, the milk had been set,
The cogs had been scaudit,[1] the byre a' made straight,
When Meg wi' clean apron an' short gown sae trig,
Took her ways tae the trystin' tree, near the auld brig.[2]

O licht fa's the foot when the heart kens nae care,
An' bricht is the e'e that brims owre wi' love-lair;
The simple bit lilt[3] bears owre a' sangs the gree,[4]
That a lass sings when bound for the auld trystin' tree.

"I lo'e na a laddie but ane," Meg sings oot,
Wi' voice saft an' tunefu', an' clear as a flute;
The thocht of that laddie lichts up a' her face,
An' the hope o' her tryst gars[5] her quicken her pace.

. . . . . .

Wi' lang swinging step, an' a heart licht as Meg's,
Wha's this that comes whistlin' thro' rashes an' seggs?[6]
It's Robin that wons in the Smiddy, maybe
Twa guid mile doun the burn frae the auld trystin' tree.

He thocht o' the tryst a' the lang simmer day,
O' hoo Meg will greet him, an' what he will say;
He hauf thinks that Meg michtna[7] tak' it amiss,
If he should, sae to speak, break the ice wi' a kiss!

[1] The pails had been scalded. [2] Bridge. [3] Little song. [4] Pre-eminence.
[5] Makes. [6] Rushes and sedges. [7] Might not.

An' jist as he's smilin' the brig comes in sicht,
An' the auld tree beside it that shines in the licht,
The licht that gleams gowden[1] on Meg's bonnie hair,
For the first blink has told him that she's sittin' there.

But noo wi' ilk step he gets mair an' mair blate,[2]
Till reachin' the tree he sits doun on the sate,
At airm's length frae Meg, an' no lookin' her way,
By an' by says, "Hoo's a' wi' ye, up by, the day?"[3]

"O fine," answers Meg, an' there's naething mair said,
Rab whistles, Meg pecks at the fringe o' her plaid;
Ilk ane at the ither keeks hidlins[4] fu' sweet,
Till at last, hoo I kenna, twa pair o' een meet.

Noo Robin draps whistlin', an' says, "Meg, my lass,
I ne'er saw sic craps,[5] baith o' corn an' o' grass,
Is your hay a' in?" an' wi' ilk wee bit phrase
He wins nearer the lass, till he touches her taes.

He talks o' the neeps,[6] o' the butter an' cheese,
An' grips a plump haun' that responds tae his squeeze,
His airm fin's its way roun' Meg's denty bit waist,
An' she disna look angry, though unco shamefaced.

Nae need for the lips tae speak what can be seen,
By the clasp o' the haun' an' the glance o' the een,
Nae need tae palaver o' luve atween twa,
That hae lippened till ither[7] for ance an' for a'.

[1] Golden. [2] Shy. [3] How's all with you, up the way, to-day.
[4] Peeps with sidelong glances. [5] Crops. [6] Turnips.
[7] Plighted their troth.

Their coortin' speeds brawly,[1] but on the nicht[2] creeps,
The mune thro' the trees at their leave-takin' peeps,
Meg's hair an' Rab's whiskers seem unco confused,
An' the wished-for kiss hasna, I trow, been refused.

[1] Bravely. [2] Night.

A LEGEND OF THE WATER-SPIRIT CALLED NECKAN.

DARK and deep and calm as night
  Flows the stream along;
Quiet in the evening light,
  As love's fulness strong
Flowing, flowing, flowing on
Swift as sweet days come and gone,
Low murmuring like Eternity.
Softly step two children bright,
Hearkening for the Water-Sprite,
Nigh unto the alder-tree
Where at evening singeth he
As he doth sing to-night,
Floating on the azure tide
Fairer than an earthly bride.
While the river flows along,
Hearken to the spirit's song:
  "Softly falls the summer
    Over all the land,
  Softly flows the river
    Past its mossy strand
Over-arched by wild-rose bowers,
Clustered with the woodbine flowers
Hanging down their fragrant tresses
Over shady cool recesses,
Where the water-lilies gleam
Tranquil on the moving stream.

Deep beneath, the spirits glide
Who know not sorrow, hate nor pride;
Loving earth with its fair things,
Mountain and valley and sunny lea,
But most the rivers so pure and free,
Sparkling fountains, secret springs,
Dewy flowers in radiant bloom,
Morning glories, midnight gloom,
Loving all things pure and bright
With unspeakable delight.
Learning from the starry skies
Everlasting mysteries" . . .
Sudden ceased both lyre and song,
(Softly flowed the stream along)
For thus spake those children young:
"Oh Neckan, what availeth thee
To sing and play so gloriously
In perfect exultation?
What avail the starry skies,
Or the splendour of thine eyes,
Or the unsealed mysteries?
For thee is no salvation!"
Weeping sore the Spirit threw
Far his golden-stringèd lyre,
Piteous wailing, wild and shrill,
Sank he in the waters blue;
In a fairy-ring of fire
Once they flashed and then were still.
Homeward turned the children bright
Through the meadows green and wide,
Soon their father's knee beside
Told they of the Water-Sprite.
Grave he heard them, answering then

"Nay, my children, ye were wrong
Thus to mar the Spirit's song.
Haste to-morrow to the glen
When the light is fair and dim
That the sunset giveth,
Tell the Spirit that for him,
Him too the Saviour liveth."
On the morrow when the sun
To the western gates had run,
Forth there stepped those children bright
Hearkening for the Water-Sprite.
Soon they heard him wailing low
In his sad extreme of woe,
Underneath the alder-tree
Weeping in his misery.
Softly drew the children near,
Softly spake: "Oh, Spirit, hear,
Our sire this comfort giveth:
God has sent his Son to be
The world's Redeemer, then for thee
See! the Redeemer liveth!"
Then the Spirit wept no more,
Golden-stringèd lyre he strung,
Soon melodious echoes rung
From the farther, wooded shore.
Gloriously he played and sung,
Whilst the sun withdrew his light,
Slowly rose behind the trees
Orion and the Pleiades,
And still went singing on the joyful Water-Sprite.

UNDER DEEP APPLE BOUGHS.

THE garden-shadows are flecked with the glory of light.
In the light, the tulips flame; in the dark, fern fronds uncurl;
And each red apple-bloom bursts its beauty into white,
As if a ruby should break, and shatter into a pearl.

They flutter slowly downward, and fall, soft as a snow-shower,
Here at our feet their loveliness finds an end.
Was it worth to make such beauty only for one hour;
Do you grieve for the fate of the blossoms, O my friend?

When Autumn stands in the land, with full and bounteous bosom,
Honey-sweet fruit shall hang, ripening and red on the wall,
Shall girlhood's gift of versing be but a barren blossom?
Wait, heart. Thy fruit shall set, when the flowers of fancy fall.

A WASTED DAY.

HERE in the dusky garden-plot I sit,
Laid in my lap are globed chrysanthemums,
Round which the gold-barred bee incessant hums,
And purple-wingèd butterflies still flit.
The night is near, the evening lamp is lit,
I have let day go by in dreamy thought,
But holding one poor day as less than nought
Have let it pass, taking no count of it.
But soon shall come a time, I know not when,
I shall go forth alone into the dark,
When my strained eyes no more on earth shall see
The face of lover or of friend; and then
At the bed-foot where I lie, stiff and stark,
This wasted Day shall stand, and laugh at me.

PESSIMISM.

Not Spring—too lavish of her bud and leaf—
But Autumn, with sad eyes and brow austere,
When fields are bare, and woods are brown and sere,
And leaden skies weep their exhaustless grief:
Spring is so much too bright, since Spring is brief.
And in our hearts is autumn all the year,
Least sad when the wild pastures are most drear,
And fields grieve most robbed of the last gold sheaf.

For when the plough goes down the brown wet field,
A delicate doubtful throb of hope is ours—
What if this coming Spring at last should yield
Joy, with her too profuse unasked-for flowers?
Not all our Springs of commonplace and pain
Have taught us now that autumn hope is vain.

THE LAST ENVOY.

This wind, that through the silent woodland blows,
O'er rippling corn and dreaming pasture goes
  Straight to the garden where the heart of spring
Faints in the heart of summer's earliest rose.

Dimpling the meadow's grassy green and grey,
By furze that yellows all the common way,
  Gathering the gladness of the flowering broom,
And too persistent fragrance of the may—

Gathering whatever is of sweet and dear,
The wandering wind has passed away from here,
  Has passed to where within your garden waits
The concentrated sweetness of the year.

And in your leafed enclosure as you stood,
Training your flowers to new beatitude—
  Ah! did you guess the wind that kissed your hair
Had kissed my forehead in this solitude—

Had kissed my lips, and gathered there the heat
It breathed upon your mouth, my only sweet—
  Had gathered from my eyes the tender thought
That drooped your eyes, and stirred your pulses' beat?

You only thought the sun's caress too warm
That lay upon your bosom and your arm;
  You did not guess the wind had brought from me
The unacknowledged fancy's fire and charm—

You only said, 'Too strong these sunlit skies,
More dear the moments when the daylight dies!'
  And then you dreamed of meetings by your gate
In sanctity of sunset and moonrise.

To-night, when he shall come and meet you there,
To kiss your lips and hands and eyes and hair,
  To light with love and hope youth's waiting shrine—
Think of my love; and my assured despair!

To-night the wind will rob the languid flowers
Of secret scents kept close through daylit hours;
  It will blow coolly over dewy lawns,
Where the laburnums fall in silent showers.

I, too, shall learn a secret then—shall wrest
Life's hidden things from out her languorous breast,
  Shall learn the way that leads away from life
Into the land where nothing lives but rest.

You will not know that the cold air you prize
After the stormy sweetness of his sighs,
  Is cold from blowing through a moonlit wood
Over the hollow where a dead man lies!

HOAR FROST.

"*By the breath of God frost is given.*"—JOB xxxvii. 10.

YESTERDAY the mists uncertain
Spread their dark bewildering curtain
Over all the face of Nature, till the night fell cold and grey;
Then a sudden frost was given,
And the heavy fogs were riven
Into clear and perfect crystals, clothing every leafless spray,
Ere the lingering shades were driven
From the portals of to-day.

Now the early sunlight tinges
All the transitory fringes
Pendent from each wayside hedgerow, flinging opal lights between:
Every blade of grass upraises
Jewels meet for royal praises;
Dainty coronals of silver glisten with unearthly sheen,
Where, in summer-time, the daisies
Immemorially have been.

Hushed in dream-like adoration,
Robed as if for bright translation,
All the trees stand forth in vestures such as summer ne'er restores;

On their veiled celestial faces,
With these unfamiliar graces
They are shadowy archangels watching from these mortal shores,
Where, far up the sapphire spaces,
Shine the everlasting doors.

So life's many woes engender
Grievous mists that hide the splendour
Of the strong eternal purpose reigning sun-like over all;
But when midnight dreams are ending,
Through the solemn hush descending,
God shall breathe upon the shadows, and the frost of death shall fall,
Evermore the mists suspending
In irrevocable thrall.

By that sacrament unchosen,
Pain and sorrow shall be frozen
Into unimagined beauty, that eternally shall last;
Every lost hope, idly drifted,
Shall be found with radiance gifted,
And forgotten tears, like crystals, on the landscape shall be cast,
When the gates of dawn are lifted
O'er the shadows of the past.

In that new ethereal raiment
Love shall win its over-payment
For the days that mourned by reason of the vapour's chill disguise;

All the sadness of their story
Shall be crowned with splendour hoary,
When the life, once dark and leafless, shall put on with glad surprise
Its exceeding weight of glory
In the morning of the skies!

ATLANTIS.

I.

When the long twilight waned upon the rim
Of the earth and sky, a voice within me cried,
"Yonder thy way lies, o'er yon opal tide,
—Forth to the west before thine eyes grow dim!"
So forth I fared unwearying, till the slim
Boughs of an unknown islet I descried,
Pencilled against the horizon, waving wide
And many hued, like wings of cherubim.

Aye, there it was, the dream of many a year.
The vision vanishing through dark and day,
The lost isle veiled in world-old mystery,
Sought and not found, green while the earth turns grey.
Strange blossoms fluttered down to welcome me,
And whispering in strange tongues, the waves drew near.

ATLANTIS

II.

Asleep it lies,—the jealous seas seclude
  Its splendour for themselves, in wreaths and rings
  Of liquid light; no languid echo brings
The slenderest sound, save that when hushed winds brood
Over the tide that ebbs out sunset-hued,—
  High in the rose-hung rocks, a strange bird sings
  Decrescent through the sweet diminishings
Of gradual light o'er each shore-solitude.

The sunrise kisses its unpastured hills,
  The sunset throbs above its valleys deep,
The pensive twilight folds its daffodils;
The pearly pillars, its foundations, glow
With shafts of light, what time the moon lies low,
  Upon the dawn's gold threshold fallen asleep.

THE HOME COMING.

From the trees the wind is stripping
Yellow leaflets dank and dripping,
And the daffodil-sunset tipping
All the hills with misty light;
Where the fitful gleam has rested,
Waves, a moment amber-crested,
Now with deeper gloom invested,
Groan, impatient for the night.

Dusk enfolded, shadow-holden,
Mossy barn and wheat-rick golden,
Granary grey and farmstead olden,
Swathed in restful drowsing lie.
Gulls cry down the shore,—and over
Flooded fields the wailing plover
Strays, and lonely curlews hover
Black against the fading sky.

But while darkness nearer closes,
And the hamlet hushed reposes,—
Summer wakens all its roses
Forth to blossom in my heart,

When with rapturous joy completest
In another moment fleetest
I shall greet you, O my sweetest,
Held so long from me apart.

Every wave expectant glistens,
Every leaf on tiptoe listens,
Strange sounds wander in the distance
O'er the stubble-fields new ploughed;
All the starry lamps are burning,
Lit to welcome your returning,
And the moon, my bliss discerning,
Springs from out a sable cloud.

Blow keen wind from off the hilly
Woodlands damp and pastures chilly,
But around my love, my lily,
Breathe more languid and more low;
Sweet world-old love-legends sing her,
Delicate corn-odours bring her,
Faint warm fragrances that linger
Where the latest violets grow.

Milk white moon, through cloud-wrack hoary,
Pour in pearly streams thy glory,
Stoop thy horn to hear our story,
Droop thy curve to kiss my dear.
Wreathe her round with glimmerings tender,
Crown her brows with mystic splendour,
With thine influence pure befriend her,
Steadfast through the waning year.

Comes she not? the darkness thickens,—
All my soul with longing sickens,
All my heart its beating quickens,
To a joy-march wild and fast.
O to mark her fleet feet nearing,
O to find at her appearing,
Light and night, and sight and hearing,
Swallowed up in joy at last!

A WEST-COUNTRY LOVE-SONG.

O, THE sweet dream of the springtide!
O, the quiet laugh of the morn!
When the brook rippled down to the foot of the town,
And everywhere flowers were born,
And pear trees stood white in the orchard,
And daisies blushed red in the clover,
And through the soft rain the thrush sang in the lane,
Where all the flower-faces drooped over.

O, the faint fragrance of roses,
Crumpled up, pink and white, in your hand,
When all the long day comes the breath of the hay,
And the brook bubbles down to the sand—
To the sand and the glittering tide,
And the marsh and the fields of red clover,
Where the golden-tipped Iris groweth, I wis,
And the curlew's long whistle wails over.

Now with that look in your face,
With the sunlight aslant on your cheek,
Will you understand, while I hold your hand,
And, oh, dearest maid, let me speak?
For the west wind, with stories of old,
Blows wild across bird's-foot and clover,
As the sea turns to grey at the end of the day,
And all the flower-faces droop over.

NOTES.

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LADY ELIZABETH CAREW.—Born 1594.—The only printed work that bears her name is "The Tragedie of Marian the faire Queene of Iewry, written by that learned, virtuous, and truly noble Ladie E[lizabeth] C[arew] 1613" . . . 1

MARGARET, DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE.—Died 1673.—She wrote many poems, plays, orations, and essays in conjunction with her husband; also in 1653 she published a volume entitled "Poems and Fancies" 3

KATHERINE PHILIPS, "The Matchless Orinda."—1631-1664.—"Poems by Mrs. Katherine Philips, the Matchless Orinda, to which is added Monsieur Corneille's Pompey and Horace, Tragedies with several other translations out of the French. London, 1667" 4

APHRA BEHN, MRS.—1640-1689.—She was the first English woman who adopted literature as á profession. She wrote numerous plays, republished in one volume in 1782; several novels, which were collectively published in 1698; two volumes of poems, "Collected Poems" 1684; and "Poetical Remains," published in 1698, after her death . . 6

ANN FINCH, COUNTESS OF WINCHELSEA—*About* 1660-1720.—"The Spleen, a pindaric ode," 1701; "The Prodigy," 1706; "Miscellany Poems," 1713; "Aristomenes, a Tragedy;" also two MS. Collections of unpublished poems. Wordsworth said of her, "It is remarkable that excepting the *Nocturnal Reverie* (of the Countess of Winchelsea), and the 'Windsor Forest' of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of 'Paradise Lost" and 'The Seasons' does not contain a single new image of external nature" . 7

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LADY GRISELL BAILLIE—1665-1746.—There exists no single edition of her poems; some are to be found in Allan Ramsay's "Tea-Table Miscellany," and some in Tytler and Watson's "Songstresses of Scotland." An excellent memoir of her eventful life was written by her granddaughter, Lady Murray of Stanhope 9

JEAN ADAMS—1710-1765.—The greater part of her life was spent as nursery governess and sewing-maid in a Scotch manse. This authoress of one of the most popular songs of Scotland died unknown in the Greenock Workhouse, and was buried in a pauper's grave. Her poems were published for her in Glasgow in 1734 12

ALISON COCKBURN, Mrs.—1712-1794.—"The Flowers of the Forest" was published about 1765; it was written before her marriage, while still Miss Rutherford, at the request of an old gentleman who played to her the air of an old ballad of the same name 15

JANE ELLIOT—1727-1805.—Her version of "Flowers of the Forest," is a ballad on the battle of Flodden, and was written about 1755 in fulfilment of a wager with her brother; it rapidly spread through the country as a long-lost spirited ballad revived. It was not till some years later that the true authorship was known 16

HESTER PIOZZI, Mrs.—1740-1820.—Contributed a good many poems to "The Florence Miscellany," and was the author of one or two prose writings. Her poem of "The Three Warnings" was published with the fairy tale, "The Fountains," of her friend Dr. Johnson, in 1766 . . 18

ISOBEL PAGAN—1741-1821.—An Ayrshire "lucky," "who kept an alehouse and sold whiskey without a license." In 1805 a volume of her rhymes was published. She often sang her own songs as a means of subsistence 22

ANNE HUNTER, Mrs.—1742-1821.—The wife of the distinguished anatomist, John Hunter. Her poems were published 1802 . 24

ANNA LETITIA BARBAULD, Mrs.—1743-1825.—Wrote several prose works. Her poems were brought out in two volumes,

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with the addition of a few of her letters, and a memoir written by her niece, Lucy Aitkin, in 1826 25

HANNAH MORE—1745-1833.—"The Search after Happiness," 1773; "The Inflexible Captive," 1774; "Percy," 1773; "The Fatal Falsehood," 1779; "Sacred Dramas," 1782; "The Bas Blue," 1786; "Florie," 1786; "The Feast of Freedom," 1786; "Sir Eldred of the Bower," 1827. The following well-known couplet is due to this author:— . 27

"In men this blunder still you find,
All think their little set mankind!"

SUSANNA BLAMIRE—1747-1794.—Her poetical works were collected into one volume, with a memoir, in 1842 . . 33

ANNA SEWARD—1747-1809.—Called by her admirers "The Swan of Lichfield." Her poems, in three volumes, were published in 1810, with a memoir written by her friend, Sir Walter Scott 37

CHARLOTTE SMITH—1749-1806.—"Elegiac Sonnets and other Essays," 1784; "The Emigrants." Wordsworth described her as "a lady to whom English verse is under greater obligations than are likely to be either acknowledged or remembered. She wrote little, and that little unambitiously, but with true feeling for rural Nature, at a time when Nature was not much regarded by English Poets; for in point of time her earlier writings preceded, I believe, those of Cowper and Burns" . 41

LADY ANNE BARNARD—1750-1825.—Sir Walter Scott said of the first part (printed herein) of "Auld Robin Gray," "a real pastoral, worth all the dialogues Corydon and Phyllis have together spoken from the days of Theocritus downwards" . 42

ANNE GRANT, Mrs.—Born 1765.—"Eighteen Hundred and Thirteen," 1814; "Poems," 1813 44

JEAN GLOVER.—1758-1800.—The daughter of a weaver at Kilmarnock; she married a strolling actor and became the best singer and actor of his troop 46

ELIZABETH HAMILTON, Mrs.—1758-1816.—Irish by birth, but Scottish by descent. She wrote songs and various prose works. 47

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JOANNA BAILLIE — 1762-1851. — Her works are: "Fugitive Verses," 1st series 1790, 2nd series 1840; "Plays on the Passions," vol. i., 1798; vol. ii., 1802; vol. iii., 1812; "Family Legend," 1810; "Metrical Legends," 1821; "Dramas," 3 vols, 1836. Sir Walter Scott paid her the following strong compliment in his poem "Marmion":— . . . 49

> "From the wild harp, which silent hung
> By silver Avon's holy shore,
> Till twice an hundred years roll'd o'er;
> When she, the bold enchantress, came,
> With fearless hand and heart on flame!
> From the pale willow snatch'd the treasure,
> And swept it with a kindred measure,
> Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove
> With Montfort's hate and Basil's love,
> Awakened by the inspired strain,
> Deem'd their own Shakespeare lived again."

CAROLINE, BARONESS NAIRNE — 1766-1845. — Known in her district as the "Flower of Strathearn." Her songs, signed with the *nom de plume* B. B., for Mrs. Bogasse of Bogan, appeared first in the "Scottish Minstrelsy." After her death they were arranged with symphonies and accompaniments for the pianoforte, by Finlay Dunn; and in 1868 appeared a collected volume, "Life and Songs of the Baroness Nairne.", 62

MARY TIGHE, Mrs.—1773-1810 —Mr. Main considers that her sonnets "deserve to be classed with the very best that have been written by women up to her time." Her works were read by Keats, and he names her in his early lines, "To Some Ladies" 72

HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS—1773-1810.—In addition to various prose works she wrote "Ode to Peace," 1783; "Peru," a poem, 1784; "Poem on the Bill lately passed for regulating the Slave Trade;" "Poems," 2 vols., 1786; "Poems on Various Subjects, with introductory remarks on the present of science and literature in France," 1823. In the last named she writes as footnote to her "Sonnet of Hope," that "Mr. Wordsworth, who lately honoured me with his visits while at Paris, repeated it to me from memory, after a lapse of many years" 75

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FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS, Mrs.—1793-1835.—Wrote "Poems," 1805; "Domestic Affections, and other Poems," 1812; "Modern Greece," 1817; "Tales and Historical Scenes in Verse," 1819; "The Sceptic," 1820; "Siege of Valencia, and other Poems," 1828; "Forest Sanctuary, and other Poems," 1812; "Records of Women, with other Poems," 1828; "Songs of Affection, and other Poems," 1830; "Hymns on the Works of Nature," 1833; "Scenes and Hymns of Life," 1834; "Natural Lyrics and Songs for Music," 1834 76

JANET HAMILTON, Mrs.—1795-1873.—"Poems and Essays of a miscellaneous character on subjects of general interest," 1863; "Poems of purpose and sketches in prose of Scottish Peasant Life and Character, etc," 1865; "Poems and Ballads," 1868. Mrs. Hamilton was the wife of a shoemaker in Lanarkshire, and the mother of ten children. She said of herself, "Shakespeare was my teacher; my ear is also my guide so far; and besides this God has given me a good tack of natural grammar. You might as well ask the laverock (lark) how it can sing, as ask me how I can write according to the rules of grammar." Mr. John Bright said of her, "She is the most remarkable old woman I ever heard of. . . . Hers is an amazing story. It has surprised me beyond anything I have read for a long time" 83

SARA COLERIDGE, Mrs.—1803-1852.—"Phantasmion," a fairy tale, 1837, containing various songs. In the second edition of S. T. Coleridge's "Biographia Literaria," prepared for publication "by the late Henry Nelson Coleridge, and by his widow," occur the "Lines on the common saying that Love is blind," by Sara Coleridge. "These lines are an attempt to bring out a sentiment which my father once expressed to me on the common saying that Love is blind." 88

LETITIA ELIZABETH LANDON (L.E.L.)—1802-1838.—A prolific and once favourite poetical writer. There are several collective editions of her poems 92

HARRIET MARTINEAU.—1802-1876. This well-known poetical economist and novelist wrote a poem entitled "August," which appeared in the *Monthly Repository*, 1834 . . 97

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MARY HOWITT, Mrs.—Born 1804.—Published, with her husband, William Howitt, "The Forest Minstrel, and other Poems," 1823; "The Seven Temptations," 1834; "Fireside Verses," 1845; "Ballads and other Poems," 1847; "Tales in verse for Young People," 1865; also various prose works and translations of C. Bremer's novels 99

CAROLINE NORTON, Hon. Mrs.—1809-1877.—Granddaughter of the dramatist, Richard Brinsley Sheridan. She wrote several novels; also, "The Sorrows of Rosalie," 1829; "The Nudging One," 1830; "The Dream," 1841; "The Child of the Islands," 1846; "Aunt Carry's Ballads for Children," 1848; "Lady of La Garaye," 1863 103

LADY DUFFERIN—1807-1825.—Sister to the Hon. Mrs. Caroline Norton. "Lispings from Low Latitudes" . . . 106

CATHERINE FANSHAWE wrote several poems—some of which were published in a volume of miscellaneous poems by various authors, edited by Joanna Baillie, for the benefit of a friend. Of the poem quoted herein, Miss Mitford writes as follows:—"I have it myself printed in two editions of Lord Byron's works; the one English, the other American." The friend already quoted says of it—"The Letter H (I mean the Enigma so called, ascribed to Lord Byron), she wrote at Deepdene. I well remember her bringing it down at breakfast and reading it to us, and my impression is that she had then just composed it" 109

JANE WELSH CARLYLE, Mrs.—The wife of Thomas Carlyle. Her poem quoted in this book was written at Craigenputtoch in 1832, and enclosed in a letter to Francis Jeffreys. It is published in "Thomas Carlyle—a History of the first forty years of his life, 1795-1835"—by J. A Froude, M.A. . . 110

MARY COWDEN-CLARKE, Mrs.—Born 1809.—In addition to her concordance to Shakespeare, etc., she published in 1881 a volume of poems entitled "Honey from the Weed" . . 112

ELIZABETH BARRETT-BROWNING, Mrs.—1809-1861.—Wife of Robert Browning the poet, and mother of Robert Barrett-Browning, the artist. Her works are "Essay on Mind, and

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other Poems," 1826; "Prometheus Bound, and other Poems," 1833; "The Seraphim, and other Poems," 1838; "The Drama of Exile," 1844; "Poems," 2 vols., 1844; "Casa Guidi Windows," 1851; "Aurora Leigh," 1856; "Poems before Congress," 1860; "Last Poems," 1862 . . 114

MARGARET MAXWELL INGLIS—1774-1843.—"Poems," 1838 . 162

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE—born 1811.—Actress. Daughter of Charles Kemble, the actor, and niece of Mrs. Siddons. In addition to her prose writings she published a drama, "The Star of Seville," 1837, and a volume of poems in 1844 . 163

ELIZA COOK—born 1818.—"Poems," 1840; "New Echoes," 1864; "Lays of a Wild Harp," 1835; "Diamond Dust," 1865; "Laconics," 1865 167

EMILY BRONTË—1818-1848.—Sister to Charlotte Brontë, the novelist. In 1846 a volume of poems written by her and her two sisters was published under the title "Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell." Her pseudonym was Ellis. She also was the author of the well-known novel, "Wuthering Heights" 171

LADY JANE FRANCESCA SPERANZA WILDE.—"Ugo Bassi," 1857; "Poems," 1864; and various prose works . . . 180

DORA GREENWELL.—"Stories that might be true, and other Poems," 1860; "Two Friends," 1867; "Carmina Crucis," 1871; "The Soul's Legend," 1873; "Songs of Salvation," 1873; "Camera Obscura," 1876. Various prose works . 184

MENELLA BUTE SMEDLEY.—"Lays and Ballads from English History," 1858; "Poems," 1868; "Two Dramatic Poems," 1874 186

GEORGE ELIOT—1817-1880.—This celebrated novelist published two volumes of poems; "The Spanish Gipsy," 1868; "Jubal and other Poems," 1870 191

ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTOR—1825-1864.—"Legends and Lyrics," 1858 198

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DINAH MARIA CRAIK.—This well-known novelist published a volume of her collected poems in 1880, entitled, "Thirty years: Poems old and new" 200

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.—Sister of the poet and artist, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Her poetical works are—"Verses, Dedicated to her Mother, privately printed," 1847; "The Goblin Market, and other Poems," 1862; "The Prince's Progress," 1866; "Sing-Song, a nursery rhyme book," 1872; "A Pageant, and other Poems, 1881; "Poems," 1882 . . . 208

KATHARINE S. MACQUOID, Mrs.—Novelist. Authoress of "Patty," "Louisa," etc. Mrs. Macquoid has had some verses printed in the "Welcome Guest," but the poem given herein has not been previously published . . . 222

JEAN INGELOW.—"Poems," 1836; "A Rhyming Chronicle of Incidents and Feeling," 1850; "Poems," 1863, "Poems with Illustrations," 1867; "Poems," 1880; various prose works 225

ISA CRAIG (Mrs. John Knox) gained the first prize for a Competition Ode, which was recited at the Burns Centenary Festival in 1865. She has published "Poems," 1857; "Duchess Agnes, and other Poems," 1864; "Songs of Consolation," 1874 233

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL—1836-1876.—"The Ministry of Song," 1871; "Under the Surface," 1874; "Life Chords," 1880; "Lilies and Shamrock," 1883; "Under His Shadow," 1885 236

II. ELEANOR HAMILTON KING, Mrs.—"Aspromonte," 1869; "The Disciples," 1873; "Book of Dreams," 1883 . . 239

AUGUSTA WEBSTER, Mrs.—"Blanche Lisle, and other Poems," 1860; "Lilian Gray," 1864; "The Prometheus Bound of Æschylus, literally translated," 1866; "Dramatic Studies," 1866; "A Woman Sold, and other Poems," 1867; "The Medea of Euripides literally translated into English Verse,"

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1868; "Portraits," 1870; "Auspicious Day" Drama), 1872; "Yu-Pe-Yu's Lute: A Chinese Tale in English Verse," 1874; "Disguises"—a drama, 1879; "A Book of Rhyme," 1881; "In a Day," a drama, 1882. Various prose writings. . 250

VIOLET FANE.—"From Dawn to Morn," 1872; "Denzil Place, a Story told in Verse," 1875; "The Queen of the Fairies," a village story, and other poems, 1876; "Anthony Babbington, a drama in five acts in prose and verse," 1877; "Collected Verses," 1880; various prose works 266

SARAH WILLIAMS. "Sadie,"—"Twilight Hours," 1872 . 269

ISA BLAGDEN.—"Poems," with a Memoir by Alfred Austin, 1873 272

EMILY PFEIFFER, Mrs—"Gerard's Monument, and other Poems," 1873; "Poems," "Quaterman's Grace, and other Poems," 1879; "Sonnets and other Songs," "Under the Aspens," "The Rhyme of the Lady of the Rock, and how it grew," 1884; "Sonnets," 1887; various prose writings . . 274

Hon. Mrs. WILLOUGHBY—"On the North Wind Thistledown," 1874; "Ballads," 1878 282

FREDERIKA RICHARDSON MACDONALD, Mrs.—Novelist and prose writer. The two poems quoted in this volume appeared in her novel, "Nathaniel Vaughan," 1874 . . . 284

ALICE MEYNELL, Mrs. (*née* Thompson)—"Preludes," 1875, illustrated by her sister, Lady Butler 289

Hon. Mrs. O. N. KNOX.—"Sonnets and other Poems," 1872; "Four Pictures from a Life, and other Poems," 1884 . 297

LADY CHARLOTTE ELLIOT.—"Hours of Sorrow cheered and comforted," 1856; "Thoughts in Verse on Sacred Subjects," 1869; "Poetical Leaflets," 1873; "All I Need," 1874 . 298

LOUISA S. BEVINGTON.—"Keynotes," 1879; "Poems, Lyrics, and Sonnets," 1882 301

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ADELAIDE L. HOGG, Mrs.—The poem given by this writer appeared in "Jemima," a story for girls, published in 1880 308

MATHILDE BLIND.—"St. Oran, and other Poems," 1881; "The Heather on Fire," 1886; Poems (shortly); various prose works 309

E. H. HICKEY.—"A Sculptor and other Poems," 1881. . 323

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.—"A Handful of Honeysuckle" 1878; "The Crowned Hippolytus," 1880; "The New Arcadia," 1884; "An Italian Garden," 1886; various prose works . 329

CONSTANCE C. W. NADEN.—"Songs and Sonnets of Spring-time," 1881 345

AMY LEVY.—"Xantippe, and other Verse," 1881; "A Minor Poet, and other Verses," 1884 348

E. M. CLERKE.—"The Flying Dutchman, and other Poems," 1881 350

ELLICE HOPKINS.—"Autumn Swallows; A Book of Lyrics," 1883; various prose works 357

ROBINA F. HARDY.—"Whin Blooms," 1883; various prose works, chiefly Scottish. 362

G. NOEL HATTON.—Author of "Whom Nature Leadeth," 1883; and other romances and prose writings . . . 365

MAY PROBYN.—"Poems"; "A Ballad of the Road, and other Poems," 1885 368

ROSA MULHOLLAND.—An Irish romancist, who has also published a volume of poems, entitled, "Vagrant Verses," 1886 371

EVELYN PYNE.—"The Poet in May," 1885 . . . 380

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KATHARINE TYNAN.—"Louise de la Vallière, and other Poems," 1885 385

JANE LECK.—"Dottie, and other Poems" . . . 389

MARGARET DIXON, Mrs. (M. D. C.)—"Passages from some Journals," 1886; "Chronicles of Christopher Columbus," three Lyrical Dramas 392

BESSIE CRAIGMYLE.—"Poems and Translation," 1886 . . 395

E. NESBIT.—"Lays and Legends," 1887 397

MARY ROWLES.—Has contributed many poems to magazines . 400

MARY C. GILLINGTON, ALICE E. GILLINGTON } "Ebb and Flow," shortly . . 403

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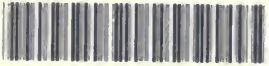

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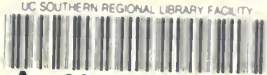

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